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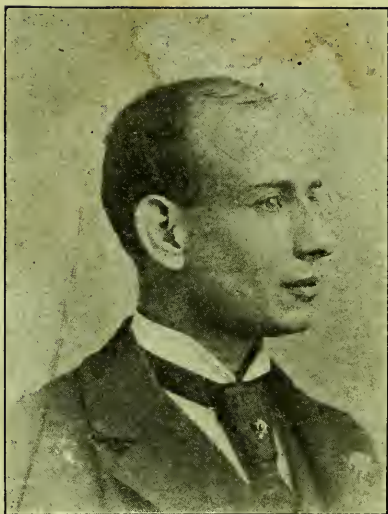
MY OWN LIFE

Or, A DESERTED WIFE



By Mrs. I. M. BEARD ❀ ❀ FIFTH EDITION

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JOHN LEWIS BEARD

MY OWN LIFE
OR
A DESERTED WIFE



BY MRS. I. M. BEARD.



PREFACE.

IF THE public will allow me, I will preface my narrative by stating why I write the following.

During the summer of 1896, while watching by the bedside of my eldest son, who was suffering from a severe attack of typhoid fever, I dropped into a doze, and while passing a few moments in this way dreamed of spending the night at the old Crumpler homestead in Germanton, Stokes County, N. C.

Just a few minutes previous to retiring someone rapped upon the door. On opening it I beheld standing before me two of my dead-and-gone ancestors. I recognized them at once as being Grandfather and Cousin Newton Crumpler. The former passed away when my father was only six-years of age. The latter was shot and fell mortally wounded while serving in the "Seven Days Fight" in and around Richmond, Va.

Cousin Newton was one of North Carolina's famous lawyers, and had he survived the cruel war would have made his mark as a military man also.

Upon entering the room Grandfather drew me to his knee and began stroking my hair, at the same time saying, "Well, well, this is my little grandchild and Jimmy's baby." He then asked me to tell him something of my life. I told him all until I reached my eighteenth birthday. There I paused and could go no further; so Grandfather said, "That will do, Cousin Nute has already told me the rest, and I see that my little girl has had ups and downs as well as we older ones. But now listen carefully to what old

Grandpa has to say: He has returned, bringing with him good news for his little one and she shall once more be happy."

I dreamed that I looked up into his face and said: "Grandpa, is it possible that I will ever be happy again?"

He told me I would and that he would make of me what he had intended my father to be.

I was anxious to hear what Grandfather intended me to be, so insisted on his telling me at once.

He began by saying that I was to write a story, entitled "My Own Life; or, A Deserted Wife." After writing the story I must have it dramatized, placed upon the stage, and in the city of New York the play would have a run of 600 nights, and I, the heroine, would be crowned "Queen of All," while the villain who wrecked my young life died the death of a murderer upon the gallows.

Then Cousin Newton addressed me for the first time since entering. He told me that at some future day I would deliver an oration in Forsyth's courthouse, but that I shouldn't be frightened, as he would be with me and I would reach the end in safety. After saying this he and Grandfather disappeared and Sister Eva appeared upon the scene, bearing in her hand a lovely garland of roses, which she placed upon my brow, and exclaimed, "Well, I guess John will at last acknowledge his little fool as his superior." Sister told me that the garland of roses which she placed upon my brow was made from off the bush in the yard at the old home.

MY OWN LIFE,
OR
A DESERTED WIFE.

CHAPTER I.

MY COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE.

DEAR READER, if you will lend me an ear I will endeavor, to the best of my ability, to portray to you a true story in real life, the heroine of my narrative being none other than the Authoress herself.

I was born September 29, 1862, in Forsyth County, near Salem, N. C., my maiden name being Ida May Crumpler. I was reared in what you might call the lap of luxury, and having an inclination to always remain at home was known as "Grandmother" or "Old Maid" among my schoolmates and friends.

Another feature of my childhood for which I was noted was hating to wound the feelings of a friend or companion, and I would grieve for days afterward if I did so unthoughtedly.

I remember very distinctly a little incident which occurred during my school days. One morning our instructress gave out the word "receive" to a class numbering 24. I stood next to head and the girl above me was my bosom friend. She spelled the word, and not thinking but what she had done so correctly, began smiling and looking around, as if to say, "I'm confident I will get the head mark to-day."

But, ah! how soon her smiles were turned into tears, when our teacher looked at me and said: "Next; now, Ida, it's your turn to spell the word 'receive.'" I knew that I would be compelled to go above my friend, as she had said, "cie" instead of "cei."

I shall never forget the feeling that came o'er me when the lesson was ended and we were told to return to our seats. My little friend was crying and so was I—she, on account of missing the head mark and I for wounding her feelings.

The incident recalled to mind one of Whittier's poems, which all of you are familiar with. You remember how the little brown-eyed girl hated to go above the boy she loved, and how she afterwards said to him:

I'm sorry that I spelled the word;
I hate to go above you,
Because—the brown eyes lower fell—
Because, you see, I love you.

My father was a painter by trade, and while not a wealthy man, was a very indulgent one. He could not bear to even hear the slightest wish made by me without it being granted, almost on the spur of the moment.

I remember of wishing one evening for the moon, and father said, "Well, my little daughter shall have it." He then stepped into the barn, very soon came out bearing a large pumpkin in his arms, and began cutting a man's face upon it. After cutting the face he placed a lighted candle on the inside and presented the pumpkin to me as a representative of the moon.

Ah! well do I recall to mind many more just such incidents where he never seemed to tire of amusing me.

I also remember the many happy days spent on my

father's farm. How vividly every scene appears before me to-night, making me feel as if though I were a child once more, and with my pet kitten roaming o'er the wide-spreading fields, with no thought of coming sorrow. Little was I dreaming then of what the dark future had in store for me. Could I have seen and known what I do now, perhaps I would not be the broken-hearted woman I am to-day. I say broken-hearted, because I feel that my heart has been crushed into a thousand pieces, and by the one who years ago promised to protect and love me.

Now, dear reader, I am going to give you a brief biography of my courtship and marriage. After doing so, I will then leave you to judge for yourself whether or not I have not just cause for exclaiming, "Yes, my heart is broken"; and also whether the man I married has proved himself worthy of the confiding and loving girl he persuaded from a happy home and kindred dear, now more than sixteen years ago.

Well do I remember my wedding morn. Everything seemed bright and gay; nothing to mar the happiness I was looking forward to, except I was not marrying with my parents' consent. But what did I care for their opinion? Was I not going to marry the man I loved? I was more than anxious for the hour to arrive when I should place my young life into his keeping, for better or worse.

Could I have realized then what I do now, I would have remained closeted within the four walls of my own room, instead of meeting one who in after years proved himself so unworthy of my love and trust.

Well, I suppose you would like to hear something in regard to my courtship before proceeding with the life that had such a tragic ending.

In speaking of my courtship it will be necessary for me to start from the very beginning, which was a long, long while ago. I was only a little girl, about five years of age, when I first began to love and trust a lad by the name of John Lewis Beard, who resided with his parents in the beautiful city of Winston, N. C., while my home was in the country, just four miles below Salem, in the same State.

Those were balmy moments for John and I when he used to come with his mother to spend the day at our lovely country-seat. Many were the happy hours we spent together while playing at hide and seek, John never growing tired, but would always insist upon remaining for an hour or so longer, when his mother would say, "Come, son, it's time we were going."

When he did finally consent to leave, it was with a fond embrace and the loving words, "Good-bye, little sweetheart, until I come again."

Then I would follow him to the gate and, with tears streaming down my cheeks, watch the form that seemed so dear to me until it was out of sight.

I did not dream then that in a few more years I would become his bride, and that he would soon grow tired of his child-wife and find happiness in loving another. But such is life.

When I was a child I used to insist upon my parents selling our country home and moving to what is now called the Twin City, but was only known then as Winston alone. My reason for wanting to leave the home of my childhood and move to the above-named place was in order that I might be near the boy I loved. Of course, I did not give this as my reason to the parents I almost idolized. Mother, however, guessed the cause without being told, and would often

say to me, "Why, Ida, you ought to be ashamed of yourself for acting as you do over that little black John Beard. He reminds me more of an Indian than anything else."

All that my parents could do or say had no effect upon me whatever; and when I was between eight and nine years of age father agreed to dispose of our country-seat and move to the city of Winston.

You can imagine how delighted I was to know that I would soon be near my heart's idol.

After papa and mamma were comfortably domiciled in their new abode, my little Indian and I began our courtship in the right way, as we termed it. He and I attended the same day school, which was taught by the Misses Welfare, in Salem.

I can see John now as he came rushing into the school-room, just five minutes late, with a box of cigars under his arm and trying to make some excuse for his tardiness.

At recess he would come to me and say: "Why, good morning, pet; here is an apple and a package of candy for you." Then I would blush as I took the proffered gift, and many were the smiles that we exchanged between us.

When the time arrived for our return home, we would walk hand in hand along the streets until we came within sight of my father's residence. Then we were compelled to bid one another adieu until the morrow.

We were continually presenting each other with some token of affection in the way of confectioneries, flowers, etc. My lover seemed to have a perfect mania for flowers, therefore mother's forcing house was very often minus her most choice blooms on his account. Of course I always received a boquet in return.

I remember being very ill once with the measles, and one evening when I was feeling all out of sorts some one rapped upon the door of my room. I found it to be Miss Mattie Watkins, a friend and school-mate of mine, who had called for the purpose of delivering a message from John. She was also the bearer of a box containing a tiny moss-rose bud, which I appreciated no little on account of its being sent me by the apple of my eye. I had this precious flower placed in a glass of water near me and each time I heard mother coming up the stairs I would slip John's gift under my pillow for fear she would question me as to where it came from.

John and I had lots of fun in trying to keep out of papa and mamma's way, as they forbade me even to speak to him; so, of course, he did not dare attempt such a thing as calling upon me at my own home. We were compelled to agree upon some place where we could meet each other and spend a pleasant evening, or an hour or so, without being disturbed by friend or foe. I would always tell some plausible story to my parents in order to get away from home without being suspected of doing anything they did not approve of.

Very often I would say, "Mamma, I am going to visit the Misses Jones," friends of mine who lived near the Mineral Spring, in Salem. You may rest assured that I did not visit my friends every time I said I was going to, but would meet John somewhere near the Cedar avenue gate, where he generally had a conveyance in readiness. Then off we would go for a pleasant drive through the country, where we would be entirely lost to the outside world for the time being, so far as we were concerned.

Ah! how many happy hours we spent together,

feeling all the while that stolen interviews were the sweeter. Things continued in this way until I was in my fourteenth year and John eighteen, when we decided to run away and get married, but were foiled in our attempt by a friend of my father's informing him of our intentions.

Everything has an ending, and ours came all too soon. At least we thought so when my parents put a stop to our clandestine meetings by locking me up in a room for days at a time, with scarcely anything to eat or drink; and mother would say, "Now, Ida, you must remain where you are until you are willing to promise never to look at or speak to that little black Beard boy again."

This treatment only made me all the more determined not to promise anything of the kind, but to remain true to John, regardless of all opposition.

Things looked dark and gloomy to he and I, as we could see no way of overcoming the great calamity that had befallen us.

Just think, there I was locked in my room, not even allowed the privilege of going down stairs when meal time came.

If I happened to get anything to eat at all, it was slipped to me by Sister Flora or one of the servants, who would say, "Here take this quickly, or we shall be found out and punished for what we have done." Sister also took great delight in slipping letters to me from my lover. I imagine I can hear Flora now as she came running up the stairs and knocking gently upon my door, saying, "Ida, here is a letter for you from Coonie." "Coonie" was a nickname given to John by me, so that everyone wouldn't know of whom I was speaking.

Oh! how my heart would beat on hearing his name

mentioned and oh! how eagerly I broke the seal of my precious missive, in order that my eyes might rest upon the endearing words written within.

I had quite a time in being able to receive John's letters. However, I at last thought of a plan which worked nicely. At nightfall he would throw them under a rosebush in the yard; then Flora would place them in a tiny basket and (by means of a wire) I would draw them to my window, pressing each one to my lips and heart before reading their contents. On account of my imprisonment I also had quite a time in procuring suitable stationery with which to answer them. Often I was compelled to sharpen a charcoal and use brown wrapping paper for the purpose.

I was a little tardy once in regard to this matter, and in the meantime received two more epistles from my lover, in which he insisted that I send an answer immediately to the many foolish questions he had asked, and on my failing to comply with his request he made up his mind to leave Winston without informing me of his intentions. So, early on the following morning he set out upon his journey, in company with a cousin of his, whose home was in Hickory, N. C. He intended accompanying his cousin as far as Hickory for the purpose of entering a printing office of some kind as a typo. They did not go direct from here to the above-named city, but I think from what John told me in after years they wandered nearly all over Western North Carolina before reaching their destination.

On doing so John only remained four months. He soon became dissatisfied with his new position and concluded he would leave for other parts.

After bidding his cousin an affectionate farewell,

he left for Salisbury, N. C., the former home of his ancestors.

Now, all this time he kept closely concealed next to his heart the little missives written by me to him, and in five years after produced them in the same condition they were when received.

But, what do you suppose the girl he had left behind was doing all these weary, weary days, with no tidings of her absent one? Why, sitting at home crying her eyes out on account of being left without a word of warning or explanation as to the cause of her being so cruelly treated.

God did not intend this state of affairs to last forever, so one bright Sabbath morn in November, 1877, I left my home for the purpose of attending Sunday School, as I had been accustomed to doing. On reaching the church I beheld my boy lover and play-mate of former years waiting for me at the door, just as if though nothing had ever happened.

Then and there our vows were renewed, and no happier couple ever existed than we were for a year or more. But another misunderstanding followed, on account of John's being of a very jealous disposition and always wanting his own way about everything, never willing to give way to me for a single moment, and, of course, this caused another separation, he leaving for the second time without a word of warning and going back to his old haunts in Salisbury, where he remained for a few days, while waiting for his cousin, Peter Beard, to accompany him on a wild-goose chase through the Western part of North Carolina.

In years afterward my noble lord often amused me for hours at a time by relating how they deceived the people along the road in order to obtain food and lodging without paying for it.

John said that one day he would be a poor blind man, who was being led by his cousin all over the State for the purpose of earning a few dollars in this way for himself, and also for his widowed mother, who remained at home anxiously awaiting her boy's return.

The following day he represented himself as being a noted evangelist, who was trying to save the souls of his fellowmen from going down to perdition.

On the third day he informed the people that he was a good old corn-doctor, who could cure corns of long standing or those of short duration.

On the fourth and last day of their journey he palmed himself off as a deaf and dumb mute and astonished the natives wherever he went by spelling and making signs with his fingers. On the eve of the fourth day they reached Asheville, N. C., where they remained for a week or more with another cousin of theirs; but finally becoming tired and anxious to be going they again set out for parts unknown.

After wandering around for some time they concluded they would return to Salisbury and try their hand at farming. John soon found out that he was not intended for a tiller of the soil, therefore he would lay down the hoe and enter the printing business once more.

He afterwards fell desperately in love, or at least thought so, with a young lady by the name of Howard, who was a distant relative of his. After paying her attention for some time they became engaged and everything seemed in a fair way for a happy union until a few days previous to their wedding. Then all at once John came to the conclusion that he did not really love his intended and thought it best to inform her accordingly. He called upon his lady-love and

informed her as to the decision he had arrived at in regard to their becoming one; and also insisted at the same time that she return to him their engagement ring.

After complying with his request, Miss Howard politely told him to leave her father's residence and never speak to her again. So away went John with no thought of the broken heart he had left behind, but went straight to his boarding-house and made preparations for his departure from the city.

On leaving Salisbury he returned to Winston, his former home, and also the home of the girl whom he had promised to remain true to, no matter what happened. The day following his arrival in the city he made inquiry as to whether I had remained true to him or whether my heart had been given to another during his absence. On learning that my heart was still his, notwithstanding several others had proposed to me, he insisted that we again renew our vows and enter the married state as soon as possible.

I was then in my seventeenth year, just entering into womanhood, with the prospect of a bright future before me; but the One who reigns above willed it otherwise, and to-day I am the heart-broken wife of the man for whose sake I gave up home and all that was dear to me. Had I listened to parents and friends, what a different life I might now be leading.

Reader, let me impress upon your mind to take your parents' advice ere it's too late. Of course, they are not competent of choosing for you a companion through life, but very often see many little defects which you are more than willing to overlook during your courtship.

It was so with me. I could only see the bright side of the life I was about entering upon, and never

thought for a moment that the wear and tear of after years would cause me to exclaim, "Oh! had I listened in time!"

As I have already said, I was just seventeen when I promised John for the third time to become his bride, and knowing nothing in regard to his love affair while in Salisbury, began making preparations for what I now term my fatal wedding.

Why was it that Fate did not interfere and enable me to see then as I do now? I would have been spared a great deal of pain and suffering in after years.

John and I renewed our vows for the third time April 25, 1880, and on May 16th, in the same year, I promised him my hand in marriage.

Ah! that memorable day in May. It was one beautiful Sabbath afternoon, and I had gotten permission from my parents to go out walking, in company with a young man by the name of Leslie, who was then boarding with us. Immediately after leaving home I informed Mr. Leslie of my plans for the evening and insisted that he accompany me as far as Mr. F. N. Nading's residence on Liberty street, that being the place agreed upon by my lover and I for our meeting.

On arriving there we found Miss Ida, Mr. Nading's eldest daughter, and John in the parlor, waiting for us. Of course I felt as if though I were in what might be called my second heaven. And after the customary introduction between Mr. Leslie and Miss Nading, John and I left them alone and set out for a pleasant stroll. After walking around for some time we became tired, and on being near a comfortable seat my lover said, "Come, let's sit here and rest awhile before going back to the house." We had not been seated long when he began insisting that I give him an answer to the question he had asked me a

few days previous to this event. I told him I had studied over the matter and was ready to answer in the affirmative. I had scarcely finished speaking, when he placed his arm around my waist, and taking my hand in his, exclaimed: "My own little darling Ida, you have made me the happiest man in the world by promising to become my bride."

Reader, I can not explain to you my feelings at that moment. I could think of nothing but the bright future before me. I remember there were daisies growing at our feet, and after plucking a handful I remarked to John that we would keep them as a souvenir of our engagement day.

It's with a sad heart I gaze upon my favorite blossoms now, as they recall to mind what might have been had not Fate, cruel Fate, willed it otherwise.

John and I remained seated in our cozy nook until the shades of evening were gathering around us. Then I suggested that we return to Mr. Nading's residence. On doing so we found the family seated at the table enjoying their evening meal, and wondering at our prolonged absence.

After partaking of a delicious cup of tea prepared by our hostess, we set out for my father's house, in company with Mr. Leslie and Miss Nading. On arriving in sight of home Mr. Leslie and John changed places, the former accompanying me to my own door, while the latter returned with Miss Ida to her parental abode.

I remained in the parlor but a few moments after reaching home, then ran up stairs and began relating to Sister Flora the events of the evening. I remember of her saying, "Why, Ida, I am more than surprised at you for even thinking about such a thing as marrying John Beard. You know that he isn't a fit

companion for you; therefore, I hope you will abandon the idea at once, as you are his superior in every respect, and you are also aware of the fact that he would starve you to death in a short while."

Ah! how little did I think then of her prediction coming true in after years; so I took no heed to her warning voice, but continued to meet my lover as before. Yes, meeting my lover clandestinely for some time afterwards, spending many happy hours until it was nearing the time for our fatal wedding, which was to take place September 29, 1880, that being the anniversary of my eighteenth birthday, and according to the laws of North Carolina I would be at liberty to marry whom I pleased.

How well do I remember the last meeting between my lover and I, a few days previous to our wedding. We had agreed to meet each other down near the schoolgirls' play-ground in order to make necessary arrangements in regard to the coming event. It was a balmy eve in summer, and after donning my white dress, slippers and hat to correspond, I set out for our trysting place. On reaching the summer house I beheld John already seated, and upon my arrival he exclaimed, "Why, sweetheart, you look just like a bride, and will be mine soon."

Ah! how happy we were then. Why was it that Fate did not draw aside the curtain for a few moments in order that we might behold what the dark future had in store for us.

After spending an hour or so in laying our plans for the coming event, we concluded to return home. On our way back we each gathered a large bouquet of daisies, which I afterwards twined into a lovely garland for John's hat, he keeping the same for years after we were married.

It was then nearing the time for our wedding, and we had planned quite a romantic one. I was to leave home for the purpose of visiting my cousin, Mrs. Dr. York, who lived near Trap Hill, Wilkes County, N. C. Of course it was understood that John was to follow in a few days.

After my departure, and before reaching the home of my cousin, we were to climb Stone Mountain and be married at a place called "Lover's Leap." But Fate interfered again, and we were foiled for the second time in our attempt at getting married by an aunt of mine informing my parents of our proposed plans. I can almost see her now as she came to visit us early one morning. Immediately upon her arrival she began asking papa and mamma whether they had heard anything in regard to the grand wedding that was to take place on the following Wednesday. Father said no, they had not.

He then wanted to know who the contracting parties were. Aunt replied, by saying, "Why, Ida and that black John Beard. I thought you knew they were fixing to run away and get married." I heard father say, "O, I guess it's all a mistake; Ida intends visiting Cousin Eliza York next week and I suppose someone has circulated the report that she is going to get married, on account of her having quite an extensive going-away trousseau prepared."

I was just consoling myself with the thought that perhaps I would get away yet, when all at once I heard father say, "I believe I will go and speak to Ida about the affair, anyway." My heart went pit-a-pat on hearing his footsteps draw near the door. I made up my mind, however, not to tell him a falsehood, but to speak the truth, let come what would.

Immediately upon entering my room he began ply-

ing me with questions in regard to what aunt had told him. I said, "Yes, pa, it's all true; I intend marrying John on next Wednesday evening, so will give you and mother an invitation to our wedding right now."

Father then looked me straight in the face, saying as he did so, "Ida, there is one thing I want to say to you; it is this, If you marry John Beard next Wednesday your mother and I will disown you forever. I mean what I say, and you need never expect any assistance from either of us."

I remained perfectly quiet for a few moments after he had ceased speaking, then said, "All right, pa, I will never call upon you to aid me under any circumstances, but will go to the almshouse, if needs be, rather than call upon you, my father."

He then left the room, slamming the door behind him, and I afterwards heard him conversing with mother in a very excited tone, and I knew that she, too, would pay me a visit in a short while; so I again made up my mind to fight the battle bravely, whether I came out victorious or not.

On making her appearance, mother looked as if though she would like to crush me with one blow. I was embroidering a dainty little handkerchief, which she snatched from my hands, and remarked that my trip to Trap Hill was as if though it had never been thought of. She also told me that every article of wearing apparel which had been prepared for me would be locked up and remain so until I promised never to marry John Beard.

While mother and I were conversing father thought of another scheme, which he at first supposed would have a great deal of effect upon me; so he put his thoughts into execution by going up street, and on

his return home presented me with a lovely watch, necklace and pin, saying at the same time, "Now, Ida, these are yours, on one condition, and that is, you must abandon the idea of marrying Beard."

I handed the box containing the baubles back to my father and said, "Why, pa, did you think for a moment that my love could be so easily bought? It wouldn't be worth a cent if such were the case. While I would like very much to own the trinklets you have offered me, it will be impossible for me to accept them on the terms you have just spoken of."

Oh, how angry father seemed to be. He again left the room, and after remaining out for an hour or so he returned with a bright smile upon his face, saying, "Well, daughter, there is one thing more I will offer you. On your eighteenth birthday I will have placed within your room a beautiful suit of furniture if you will make the promise I have already asked."

I said, "No, pa; it isn't worth while to offer me anything more. I shall marry John regardless of all your gifts."

I might just as well have poured oil on the fire as to have said what I did.

Father fluttered around for awhile, then remarked that he would try what virtue there was in locking me up for a month or two, as he thought it would do more good than anything else.

He then left me alone once more, and I knew that I must inform my lover immediately as to what had happened during the day.

I wrote him a brief note, in which I stated that we would be compelled to make other arrangements in regard to our wedding, as my aunt had given us completely away, and that in all probability I would be locked up from that time forth.

I then rang for the chambermaid. She responded to my call at once, and on entering my room I told her that one dollar in cash should be hers if she would agree to place the note I had written into Mr. Beard's hands, and that she bring an answer on her return.

It's a very amusing thought that occurs to me when I think of how Mary opened her large mouth and eyes, saying, "Now, Miss Ida, you knows I will doo jes like you tells me to."

I suppose she was thinking of the bright silver dollar she was to receive on her return, and that was why she was so ready and willing to comply with my request.

I felt somewhat relieved after dispatching the servant with my message to John, as I knew he would make other arrangements immediately in regard to the coming event.

Mary remained away for about an hour and on her return home handed me a note from my lover, in which he stated that I need not give myself any uneasiness in regard to our wedding, as everything should be in readiness on Wednesday evening at 4 o'clock—the hour appointed for our marriage to take place. John also informed me that he had thought of another scheme, which in all probability would work better than the one first agreed upon, and that if my parents locked me up I should remain perfectly quiet until September 29, when he would drive to father's door and demand of him the keys to my room, and on his failing to produce them he would seek legal advice in regard to the matter, as I would then be of age and according to law father would have control over me no longer.

My brain was in a terrible state at that period of my life. There I was hanging in the balance, betwixt

love and duty, hardly knowing which course to pursue—whether to cling to the parents I loved so dearly or the lover I almost idolized. I chose the latter and to-day am reaping my reward.

Had I listened ere it was too late I might now be gathering in the sheaves instead of the tares.

Now, dear reader, comes the most interesting part of my narrative, as I shall endeavor to relate the events of the evening preceding my fatal wedding and those that followed.

I will never forget the last evening spent beneath my father's roof before entering upon a life of which I knew nothing.

It was on the 28th of September, 1880, that several of my friends and relatives had gathered in the parlor to have what they called a farewell chat with me while I was yet their girl companion.

Ah! what a pleasant evening we spent, playing, singing and chatting with each other until the hands of the little onyx clock upon the mantel pointed to half-past 10.

Then one of my friends remarked that it was time they all were going, in order that I might prepare for the coming event of the morrow.

I bade them an affectionate good-bye, and on reaching my room burst out crying. I felt as if I were preparing for my burial instead of the day that should have been the brightest of all others.

After retiring I could not sleep, so redressed myself and sat down by the window, thinking perhaps it was not too late to recall the step I was about to take.

Then, all at once, I imagined I could see John standing before me, with his outstretched arms, saying, "Come to me, little one; be brave and come. You shall never regret it." I suppose this thought

occurred to me on account of my receiving a note from him a few hours previous to retiring. The note ran as follows:

My Own Little Ida:

Be sure to meet me at the place appointed to-morrow at three, as I do not want to be thwarted in my plans for the future.

Yours forever,

J. L. B.

Never from memory's page will be erased the words of the bearer of that fatal note. He was an old friend of my girlhood, and the remarks he made on the eve preceding my wedding day still ring in my ear, as if they were only spoken yesterday instead of sixteen years ago.

After presenting the note, he said to me. "Well, Miss Ida, to-morrow is your wedding day and I wish you all the happiness and prosperity possible; but there's one thing I want you to bear in mind, it is this: If ever want or trouble should come to you in after years, remember that you will always find a true friend in C. M. L."

I feel as if though he would be a friend to me now in my late trouble, but at the same time I dare not inform him of my suffering, as in all probability he would think me unwomanly in doing so, especially when I at one time cast him aside for another, little thinking then that I would regret my rash act in years to come.

Now, I must return to my wedding morn. It dawned bright and beautiful, a befitting day for the little girl who was to become a bride ere the sun went down.

After passing a sleepless night, I arose at 6 a. m. with a heart almost as heavy as lead, instead of the light, happy one I should have carried within my

bosom. I made a hasty toilet and went down stairs to breakfast, but could not eat a mouthful, and one of the servants remarked that I had better drink a cup of coffee at any rate, as in all probability it would be the last time I would have the privilege of doing so while beneath my parents' roof.

Little did I think that twelve months would pass by ere I crossed the threshold of the dear old home again.

Breakfast being over, I returned to my room, and, after thoroughly cleansing hands and teeth, concluded I would run down to the parlor and play over several of the pieces I liked best.

On entering the door I beheld mother standing by the window, crying as if though her heart would break.

I pretended not to see her at first, but went straight to the piano, opened it and began playing "Robin Adair." This being finished, mother said, "Ida, I am glad you are here; now play 'Old Folks at Home,' then close the piano and come sit down by me; I have something to say to you."

She began by saying, "Well, I suppose you are determined to marry John Beard, notwithstanding all my advice in regard to the matter."

I replied in the affirmative and was more than sorry afterwards that I had spoken in such a hasty manner, as my remarks only caused the tears to flow faster from mother's eyes. I placed my arms around her neck, thinking in this way I would be able to compensate for what I had said. I also begged that she forgive the act I was about to commit, and asked her to listen to me for a few minutes, as I, too, had something to say to her.

I said, "Mother, I have always been an obedient

child, haven't I? doing whatever you requested me to do without a murmur, but the time has now arrived when I deem it necessary that I, and I alone, should choose for myself a companion through life.

"I am aware of the fact that you do not approve of my choice, but at the same time it is I and not you that is going to make the sacrifice. I know that John is poor; but what of that? I love him, and poverty shall not come between us.

"I also know that he will not be able to keep me in the style you and father have always done, but I have made up my mind to share his fate, whatever it may be, and this afternoon at 4 o'clock I shall place my young life into his keeping, for better or worse—God only knows which of the two it will be; I hope the former. But time proves all things; so let us wait and see."

Then mother said, "Ida, I have a presentment that your married life will have a tragic ending, and I had much rather see the hearse drive to my door to-day and bear you to your last resting-place than to see you become the wife of John Beard. I know that you do not really love him; it's only a schoolgirl's passing fancy, and you will find when it's too late that you were mistaken, as many others have done before; so, take my advice and remain at home. You are now hanging on the very edge of the precipice, as it were, and I, your mother, implore you to look once more before taking the fatal leap."

After mother and I had finished our conversation I ran back upstairs and began my toilet for the afternoon, as I had promised John to meet him precisely at 3, so thought it best to be in readiness by that hour.

I donned a cream-colored dress, trimmed with

garnet silk. I remember of saying to myself, "This isn't the costume a bride should wear on the eve of her marriage, but, as my parents have everything else under lock and key, I suppose I will be compelled to put it on and think nothing about the omen."

I was in the act of putting the finishing touches to my toilet, when I heard mother say to one of the servants, "Bettie, be sure you serve dinner at 11 o'clock sharp, as Ida will be eighteen then, and I have never failed all these years to have her noonday meal prepared on time, so that she could remember the hour in which she was born."

My toilet being finished, I was standing by the window whiling away the moments by looking down into the little rose-garden, where I had played so often when a child. While thus employed I heard the first tap of the dinner bell, and, knowing how peculiar mother was in regard to our being punctual at meals, I immediately repaired to the dining-room.

On reaching there I only found my little sister Eva seated at the table. She remarked that we would have a nice dinner all to ourselves, as mother and Sister Flora had gone out shopping and would not return until late in the evening.

Now, I knew very well the cause of their being absent, so ate but little on account of it. Eva began teasing me and said that I had better eat all I possibly could, as she would be willing to bet a penny I would not have any supper. I then told her to bet some of her small change and not be so extravagant with her money.

She joined me in a hearty laugh and our noonday meal was over.

I ran back to my room, while Eva to the parlor went and began playing, "See That My Grave's Kept Green," my favorite she knew.

I did not remain long in my room—just long enough to kneel and ask God's blessing upon the step I was about to take. Then the thought occurred to me that perhaps mother had returned and I would yet have the pleasure of bidding her goodbye, at any rate, so I ventured down to her room, but was doomed to disappointment, as she had not returned, and the stillness of death reigned within.

Ah! what a feeling came o'er me when I realized that I was gazing perhaps for the last time upon the scenes of my girlhood.

Why did not Fate interfere and cause me to remain within the portals of the dear old home instead of venturing out alone and unprotected, as it were, into the cold and cruel world?

Alas! I could not see until it was too late; but Time's a great healer, and it may yet pour its soothing potion upon my torn and bleeding heart, causing me to exclaim, "It was all for the best."

When I found that mother was not within her room, I said to myself, "Perhaps it is better so, as it would only add to her suffering to say goodbye to me after all these years of care and painstaking in order that she might behold the fruits of her labor by seeing me, her eldest child, become the wife of some good and noble man"; and now that I was going to disappoint her, I thought it best to go without wounding her feelings any more.

I penned a hasty note, however, and left it upon the dresser. In my note I implored mother to forgive and forget the act I was about to commit and to think of me kindly when far away.

I then rapped gently upon the parlor door. Eva opened it immediately and I said, "Well, little sister, I must be going now, so come kiss me goodbye, as

you may never have the opportunity of doing so again."

She placed her arms around my neck and I noticed tears gathering in her eyes. After kissing me twice, she said, "Ida, please do not go, but remain with us."

I felt a great lump rising in my throat, and it was some time before I could reply to her remarks. Finally I did so, by saying, "No, Eva, I can not, as I have promised John to meet him without fail, and it's now near the hour."

On seeing that I was determined to go she exclaimed, "Well, Ida, I am not going to cry any more, but will present you with a large Buckingham apple instead, as I am afraid you will be compelled to retire supperless, and it will also be a souvenir of your departure."

I thanked her for being so thoughtful in regard to the apple. I then picked up my hat and gloves, which were lying on the piano. As I did so I slipped sister's gift under a sheet of music. I did not want her to know but what I had concealed it somewhere about my person and fully intended taking it with me.

Now, everything was in readiness for my fatal leap, as mother termed it, and I was only waiting for the old town clock to chime out half-past 2. I intended leaving home at this time in order that I might spend a few moments with a friend of mine before meeting John.

After putting on hat and gloves I placed my arm around Eva's waist and pressed my lips to hers once more ere I became a bride.

Neither of us spoke and I passed out through the parlor door, closing it behind me. On reaching the hallway I could go no further, but stood gazing around, feeling as one who had or was about to com-

mit some terrible deed. My limbs refused to move and I felt as if glued to the spot.

Finally I moved on, and shall never forget the last call I made upon my friend. She was expecting me and gave me a cordial reception, saying, "Ida, I am glad you decided to spend the remaining moments of your girlhood with me."

We chatted pleasantly for some time; then I remarked that I had better be going, as I did not care to disappoint my lover by being a few minutes late.

I bade my friend an affectionate goodbye, and at the same time insisted that she accompany me as far as the Baptist church. I had promised John to meet him there, as papa and mamma had forbidden him calling for me at my own home.

Miss Hollister and I had scarcely left her father's residence when she exclaimed, "O, Ida, look, yonder comes John now. I wonder why he did not wait for you at the church? I suppose he became impatient and thought he would come in search of you."

John noticed my friend and I coming toward him, so drew rein right in front of R. J. Reynold's tobacco factory and waited for us.

On reaching him he clasped my hand in his, saying, "Well, I guess you are mine now, regardless of all your father's threats."

He then drew forth a brand new Smith & Wesson pistol, remarking as he did so that if my father attempted to follow us he would receive a bullet through his heart.

I insisted on his putting the ugly weapon out of sight, as it only reminded me of death, and such a thought should not occur to us on the eve of our marriage.

My lover then said, "All right, little one, just as

you say; I am your slave from this time forth. And where shall we drive to first?"

I remarked that I had thought of calling on Miss Nading before repairing to Mr. Pegram's residence. So we drove up Liberty street to the home of my friend, and after remaining there a short while we then set out for T. H. Pegram's, on Old Town street, where we were to be made one.

Upon our arrival there, someone remarked that guards had better be placed at the gate, as my father was superintending the painting of F. G. Crutchfield's residence, and that he might interfere while the marriage ceremony was being performed.

I remember of Mr. Pegram's telling me not to take the time to fasten my gloves, as he was afraid father was going to cause trouble.

He did not, however, and everything passed off just as if though it had been in church, with papa and mamma waiting to congratulate me upon my choice and wishing me all the happiness possible.

Ah! I was so happy then; the dark future I could not see.

I did not become frightened until a few moments after being married, and would not have done so then if it had not been for Mr. W. Y. Revelle introducing me to L. L. Stein as Mrs. John Beard.

We had quite a swell wedding, as several of our friends had gathered at Mr. Pegram's residence to witness the marriage ceremony. Miss Lelia Webb played the wedding march, and we were as happy as bride and groom ever were.

CHAPTER II.

SOME INTERESTING STATEMENTS AND FACTS.

After receiving the congratulations of our friends, we repaired to W. H. Beard's residence on Main street.

Upon arriving there we found his wife very ill, suffering with a disease from which she afterwards died, or, at least it was thought so by the outside world; but I would suggest that the public question closely W. H. Beard in regard to an overdose of chloral administered by him to his wife a few hours previous to her death.

At that time the venerable old Dr. R. D. Hay, who has slumbered beneath the sod these many years, was charged with the above crime, but I for one believe him to have been as innocent as a newborn babe of the charges preferred against him.

Shortly after breath had left Mrs. Beard's body her husband, W. H. Beard, stepped to the mantel and took therefrom a small phial, placed it into his coat pocket and then summoned the physician at once. Upon Dr. Hay's arrival he called for the phial containing the remaining portion of the deathly drug, but it was nowhere to be found. I alone had been an eye-witness to the concealing of the bottle.

Whether the one stored snugly away in Mr. Beard's pocket was the one in question I do not know, but to the best of my knowledge and belief think it to have been the same. On the following day, after Mrs. Beard had been borne to her last resting place, and the family once more at home, W. H. Beard, thinking himself alone in the room, stepped to the mantel,

then placed his hand into his pocket as if in search of something, and afterwards remarked that "no one would ever know."

John remarked on taking me to his father's residence that we would only remain there a few weeks, then go to housekeeping to ourselves; but owing to the death of his mother we remained four months instead of a few weeks.

Oh! those miserable months I passed while being compelled to reside beneath W. H. Beard's roof.

I spent some of the most wretched moments of my life there; and they, like many other things, will never be erased from memory's page.

After my mother-in-law's death all the responsibility of housekeeping fell upon my young shoulders, and not only the housekeeping exclusively, but had two small children left in my care also.

Dora, the eldest girl, was of an obstinate nature, and I could scarcely do anything at all with her, so far as training was concerned.

Jennie, the younger of the two, possessed a very affectionate disposition, therefore was more easily managed, and, of course, this caused me to become attached to her at once, and I did a great deal more for her than for Dora.

Now, all this housekeeping and managing children was entirely new to me, as I had never had any experience in this line before; I did my best, however, and took great delight in making everything appear neat and clean about my father-in-law's residence.

I would always tidy up his room with my own hands, and on returning from his daily labor he was sure to find a cheerful fire burning upon the hearth. I also took great delight in having his favorite dish in readiness when meal time came.

I have often wondered since why it was I made myself such a slave for one who was not at all capable of appreciating my worth.

My father-in-law would say to me, "Well, I declare, you are doing better than I thought you would; so just keep on in the way you have started and you will make John a real good housekeeper after all."

I suppose he meant a slave, or at least one would have thought so from the amount of work allotted me during the day. I bore with him for awhile, then made up my mind that I wasn't going to be a slave for the whole Beard family any longer, as I did not bargain for but one of them, so informed John accordingly when he returned home that evening. I told him that I was willing to work for he and I until I dropped dead, but not for the other members of his family.

Then he and his father held a private conversation and afterwards promised me a home of my own, but did not state how soon I was to take possession.

However, I went to work again with a right good will, doing willingly whatever my hands found to do. But oh, the hard battles I was compelled to fight, all for my husband's sake.

His sister Dora and brother Clarence did everything within their power to tease and worry me. They would come to the door of my room and say, "Ida, bring out mother's bed, chairs and carpet, then what would you and John have? Nothing but the bare room."

Not being satisfied with saying all this, they would begin knocking upon the door as if they fully intended it should fall to the floor. They would continue at this rate until I was forced to open the door, only to have them enter for the purpose of upsetting and soiling everything within the room.

Dora would say, "Oh! Clarence, just look at Ida's nice, clean curtains; come, let's make a black spot upon them." The words would scarcely leave her lips ere the print of her smutty hands would be left upon the curtain.

This was a little too much for me, and I made up my mind to have a home of my own, if I had to live in a rail pen with a ground floor. And on finding John to be a person who could be easily persuaded into doing almost anything, I began insisting that we move away from our tormentors as early as possible.

I not only received cruel treatment at the hands of the children, but their father's also.

On seeing that I was determined not to cook and work myself to death for the whole family, he began locking up everything within reach of me. I was not allowed a mouthful to eat, and I suppose if it had not been for Mrs. B. J. Shepherd and others I would have perished during the last few days I remained.

Oh! how many castles in the air I built while awaiting my husband's return home from the store at night. I would often say to him, "Pet, we will be very happy when once we are living together in a little home of our own; won't we?"

But, somehow, he never seemed to like the idea of going to housekeeping, and would always insist upon our remaining with his father for awhile longer.

I, being of a domestic turn of mind, knew that we would be far happier in a home of our own than with his father, or anyone else, so persisted in having a little cottage all to ourselves, where we would not be called upon to set out mother's furniture, but would try if possible to accumulate a few pieces of our own.

When John saw that I was bent upon keeping house

for us two, and us two only, he began looking around for a suitable place, but found it to be quite a task to do so, or at least to find one where he could pay the rent.

He at last heard of a little two-room cottage on Depot street, owned by Peter George, Esq. Mr. George informed us that we might become tenants of his by paying \$7 per month for the house he had to let. We accepted the offer, and on January 1, 1881, John and I took our first lesson in real housekeeping.

I will never forget the first meal we partook of in the home we had established. It consisted of light-bread, or so-called baker's bread, butter and sugar.

The few pieces of furniture purchased by us had not been delivered yet, so we were compelled to partake of our dinner in Turkish fashion, by sitting on the floor before the fire with our food beside us.

We would each take a slice of bread, then spread on the butter and sugar, with no thought of economy.

When the furniture arrived, I began placing it around the room where it would show to the best advantage. I worked on in this way for an hour or two, then asked John to assist me in giving the finishing touches to everything, as I was beginning to feel somewhat tired.

He seemed to have no desire to lend me a helping hand, and I soon found out that he was not at all domestic, and that all the housekeeping had fallen to my lot again, and I would have no one to share life's burden with me.

I had a great deal of perseverance, however, and consoled myself with the thought that perhaps in time my husband would become interested in domestic affairs, and I would yet have the pleasure of knowing that it was I and I alone who taught him his first lesson in domesticity.

But I learned to my sorrow that I was never to realize that which I had hoped for, as John cared only for hunting, fishing and making a collection of different kinds of minerals.

This occupation often caused him to be minus his meals for days at a time, and also gave me a great deal of uneasiness. Each time he failed to make his appearance at the usual hour I would think someone had killed him.

On returning from his hunting expeditions he would promise me never to go again, but his promises were like piecrust—easily broken—so I at last made up my mind to let him have his own way, and if trouble came to him he must accept it as his share.

It seemed as if though nothing gave John more pleasure than to relate to me how near he would come to losing his life while out hunting. I suppose he did this in order to tease and frighten me, or at least I tried to think so at the time.

My husband did a great many things I did not approve of, one thing especially, and that was fighting game chickens on the Holy Sabbath day. He and his friend, A. L. Payne, would start out early on Sunday morning for the purpose of witnessing a chicken battle. They would repair to some place just beyond the city limits and remain until late in the evening. Upon their return I was very often called upon to prepare for our evening meal a poor bird who happened to have both eyes plucked entirely out during the battle.

These chicken battles worried me no little. I remember of one incident in particular. I had dressed myself for the purpose of attending services at the Baptist church, but owing to my husband's proposed chicken fight I was compelled to remain at home. I read my Bible, however, and passed the remaining portion of the day as best I could.

I was not alone in my trouble on account of these hunting expeditions, as John caused Mrs. Leroy Tise a great deal of mental anxiety also by persuading Mr. T. to accompany him on several occasions.

Mrs. Tise has since remarked that my husband would do well to remain away from Winston, as she intended making things warm for him on his return.

Another trait of John's, for which he was widely known, was cutting different designs upon canes. Very often the wee hours of morning found him engaged in this way.

Now, you must bear in mind that my husband did not sit up alone during this time, but would force me to remain with him until he was ready to retire. Then, after a few moments rest I arose for the purpose of shining his boots, building fires and preparing our morning repast. This being done, I would begin clearing away the litter made by John while whittling his sticks a few hours previous.

I never complained of the litter he made, nor the amount of work I was compelled to do on his account; but, on the other hand, led him to believe I thought it a mere nothing, and that I was never happier than when engaged in doing something for him. All that I complained of was his Sunday chicken fighting and hunting expeditions.

John also had quite a mania for the skating rink and would often spend the greater portion of his time and earnings there. After passing an evening at the above-named place he would come lagging home and say to me, "Well, Ida, have we any supper or not? I was just wondering whether we would and what it would be. I only had a nickel left after paying my fees at the rink, so take it and go buy whatever you like."

I would look at my husband, then at the coin, saying, "John, you know it isn't much that we can purchase with a nickel; however, I will do the best I can toward getting something you will enjoy."

My husband carried in his pocket a peculiar kind of whistle, which he always brought into use when calling "Mice," his little pet dog. He also used the whistle as a signal when we were to have something nice for supper. Oh! how my heart sank within me when I failed to hear the familiar sound before hearing his footsteps upon the veranda, for then it was I knew that we would be compelled to retire supperless.

Our early married life reminded me of Charles Dickens and Dora, his first wife. You remember what an awful time they had with their housekeeping. Their larder was always empty, and so was ours, as it was very seldom John ever bought more than a nickel's worth of anything at a time, and expected me to make it last quite a long, long while, and also to prepare lots of good things from this.

I always tried to have something nice for Sunday, then on Saturday eve my father-in-law and the children would come over to sit until bedtime, notwithstanding they very well knew I did not care to have them around me.

Before taking their departure at 10 p. m. John would say, "Ida, go get papa and the kids some of the cake you baked to-day." Oh! how I hated to cut it; but, in order to please my husband, did so.

After eating what I had placed before them they would say, "John, do you know what this tastes like? Why more, course," and very soon the remaining portion of the cake I prized so highly would disappear, leaving me nothing for Sunday's dessert.

John and I lived on together in this way for eleven

months. Then a little boy came to brighten our home. We afterwards called him Robah, in honor of Dr. R. F. Gray.

My husband seemed perfectly devoted to our boy until he was between four and five months old. Then all at once the fond father displayed a coolness for the little lad. Why it was I could not well make out, unless it was on account of my divided affection between father and son.

John often remarked that I seemed to think more of the boy than of him. I laughingly told him one day I believed he was jealous of the babe. He then said, "Well, there is one thing certain, I don't like to have a kid come between you and I."

I said, "All right, darling, I will cease to care for our child and devote my whole life to you, and you only"; so, whenever John was present I tried to study his ways and do everything within my power to entertain and please him, but the moment he was out of sight I turned to my boy, giving him a mother's love and attention.

When he was about three months old my husband left me for the first time in order to attend the Yorktown Centennial. I thought it would kill me to be separated from John for a single day, let alone one long, long week; but when I saw that he was determined to go, I made up my mind to bear the separation as best I could, so took little Robah and went to stay with my parents until John's return.

I passed a lonesome week, notwithstanding Sister Flora's efforts to make me do otherwise. I made sure my husband would be killed ere he reached Winston again.

I will never forget his home-coming. I remember it was on Saturday, about 2 p. m., when he arrived, all sun-burned from exposure at Yorktown.

John seemed perfectly delighted to see baby and I. We remained with my parents that night and the following day went back to our own little cottage on Depot street. On arriving there we found the larder entirely empty, but I told my husband it didn't matter, as I was only too glad to have him at home with me once more.

We did without food until the next day. Of course I could have brought something from father's, but would much rather have died than to have let my people know that John did not keep me supplied with the necessaries of life.

After my husband's return from Yorktown he seemed dissatisfied with his surroundings and never cared to remain at home for any length of time, and would often remark that he was going to get a position travelling. I could never get him to abandon the idea, and while in this frame of mind God gave us another boy. I was almost sorry the little fellow had arrived, as I was afraid my husband would form a dislike for him also. But somehow or another he became attached to this one immediately upon his arrival and took great delight in trying to amuse him.

For some reason God did not intend that little Bertram should remain long with us, and when he was only sixteen months old he was called from earth back to his heavenly home.

I came near losing my mind upon the death of this precious babe. I will always remember his bright blue eyes and golden curls. One of the latter I have in my possession now. Yes, I have in my possession one tiny golden curl. It is my blue-eyed baby's curl. I also own one spot of earth, my baby's grave, and mine alone.

Twelve months after the death of little Bertram

another stranger arrived in our household. My husband and I were at a loss at first as to what we should call him, but finally decided upon naming our third boy Basil Gray, in honor again of the family physician, so now we have Robah Gray in our midst, and very proud are we of the name.

Two months previous to baby Basil's birth the death angel visited my father's residence and bore away from earth to heaven Sister Eva. On Sunday morning, September 20, 1885, after six weeks of suffering and solicitous watching, little Eva passed over to the Golden Shore, at the age of 14 years 4 months and 23 days.

It was a touching yet glorious scene which transpired a few hours before Death unlocked to her sainted spirit the portals of Eternal Life. After calling papa and mamma, my two remaining sisters and I to her bedside, she, with earnestness in her weary, flute-like voice, asked for the assurance that we would all meet her in the home of God, telling us that Jesus and the angels were with her, and that she would soon be safely on the Golden Shore.

About 4 a. m. little Eva gave herself into the hands of Jesus, and after a short prayer, in which she plead that she might be spared to see another precious Sabbath, the sweet flower ceased to speak and it was apparent to all that the end was nigh. She remained peaceful and quiet until about 8 o'clock, when she fell gently into those slumbers from which God's children never wake to weep.

'Tis hard to part when friends are dear. I weep when I think that her merry, ringing laugh will never again gladden my heart; her footsteps will make no more music as they rush to meet me; but, through the dense shadows, I know that Eva still lives amid

the transporting prospects of the Heavenly City, and that it will not be long before I shall press the sands of gold and revel in Heaven's splendors yet untold; then I shall know that it was God, and He did as He thought best.

Sister was perfectly devoted to her Sabbath School class, and her last request upon earth was, "Mamma, after I am gone take the pennies I hold in my hand and give them to my Sunday School teacher. Then send a message to Aunt Maria, who lives in far-away California, that I am dead." With these remarks she breathed her last.

The day following her death was a dismal one, but, as Dr. Rondthaler remarked on the way to the cemetery, it was in keeping with our feelings. Notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather, quite a host of friends and relatives turned out to pay their last tribute of respect to little Eva by attending her funeral and burial. Her Sabbath School class, and also the day school she attended, joined in the procession; so, amid showers of rain, tears and flowers, we committed her remains to earth.

After the death of my sister, it seemed as if though I had nothing to live for, with the exception of my boy, so I gave him my full attention, often amusing him for hours at a time by relating stories of the cruel war, in which my father fought. I can almost see little Robah now as he clapped his hands with childish glee when I tried to imitate the cannon's roar and the rattle of the kettledrum.

About that time I also began teaching my boy the English alphabet. I had a peculiar method of doing so. I would take a long, sharp stick and form the different letters upon the ground. I adopted this plan in order to please and instruct him at the same time.

Then, at nightfall, when my husband returned home from his work, or hunting expeditions, I would relate to him how baby and I had passed the day.

Oh! how many lonely hours we were compelled to spend together, as John seemed to have more than a mania for frequenting the theatre and other places of amusement. I often asked him whether he didn't think he would be far happier at home with Robah and I. The only reply he made was this, "Well, Ida, I will soon be through sowing my wild oats; then I will remain with you." I used to say to myself, "Will that time ever come?"

The night baby Basil was born my husband remarked to me on coming to supper that he would not be home until about 11 o'clock, as he would be compelled to remain at the store in order to mark a bill of goods.

Of course I thought what he told me was true, and never doubted it in the least, and when I was taken violently ill I dispatched a messenger to the store in order to inform my husband, but he was nowhere to be found, and the boy was in the act of returning home without him when someone remarked that he thought Mr. Beard was at the theatre. Sure enough, there he was, sitting right up in front of the footlights when Usher White informed him that he was wanted at the door.

Now, I knew nothing at all of this affair until several days afterwards; just thought that John came from the store when sent for, and it was by mere chance I learned otherwise. But murder will out, and my husband gave himself away before knowing it. I have always imagined since that he felt guilty over what he had done and that was why he spoke so unthoughtedly.

A few days after the birth of our child John was sitting in the room and all at once he began laughing to himself. I asked the cause of his mirth. He remarked that he just happened to think of something one of the characters in "Esmeralda" had said a few nights before.

I then asked him what he had referred to, and he said, "Oh, I see I have given myself completely away, so I suppose I might as well tell you about it."

Then and there I lost confidence in the man I thought the one among all others.

Oh! God, my life was a burden to me from that time forth, but I still hoped for the better, thinking perhaps there would yet be a change in regard to John's mode of living.

Instead of what I had hoped for, the worse came, and one evening my husband informed me that he had accepted a position at travelling and would start in a few days, as he was tired of remaining in Winston, and thought his health would be better elsewhere.

I told him I did not think he needed a tonic of this kind, as he never looked better than at present. He paid no attention to my remarks, and about the middle of July, 1886, he started out upon his first trip, selling tobacco for T. L. Vaughn, a wealthy manufacturer of our city.

After remaining away for about six weeks his employers ordered him home, for what reason I have never been able to learn, or at least to learn anything definite. I have heard several times that it was on account of his extravagance in regard to stopping at the best hotels, etc. Whether this report be true I do not know, but there is one thing I do know, and that is, he never made the second trip for T. L. Vaughn, or anyone else.

Upon his return home he seemed more dissatisfied than ever with his surroundings and took great delight in relating to me how many pleasant evenings he had spent with his lady friends while in Knoxville, Tenn., and other places. He seemed to admire one certain married lady, or woman, in particular, or at least would refer to her more frequently than to the rest.

I paid no attention to all this at first, just took it as a joke until I at last realized that John really meant what he said and seemed anxious that I should think the same.

Well, such things are calculated to bring about the family stew, and this affair caused no little one in ours. I plainly told my husband that I was sick and tired of all this, and, furthermore, he could pack his grip, or I would mine, and put an end to the life which had grown to be a burden to both of us.

When he saw I was determined to retaliate in regard to his conduct he at once informed me that the remarks made by him were only meant as a joke and not a reality. But I was not so easily beguiled into this way of thinking. Still, I let it all pass and endeavored to do my duty, as a true wife should, though at times while performing my household duties I was compelled to shed many bitter tears on account of the cruel treatment received at the hands of my husband.

It seemed to give him a great deal of pleasure to see me in tears, so I tried very hard to keep them back. When I felt them being forced to my eyes, he would always say to me, "Now, just look at that little cry-baby. Ain't you ashamed of yourself? You ought to return to our mamma and remain with her a few years yet; then, perhaps, you would be able

to understand the duties of a wife and not cry at every little thing that happened to cross your path."

But, reader, how could I refrain from relieving my feelings in this way when I realized at the last moment that I had no one to sympathize with me in my affliction? It's true, I was wedded to the miserable being we call man, but not to a kind and affectionate husband.

My grief was unbearable and at times I was almost tempted to take the life God had given me, but after reconsidering the matter, I came to the conclusion that it would be a cowardly act to commit suicide; and, furthermore, I was determined not to send my soul down to perdition on account of the cruel treatment received at the hands of one vile wretch.

My husband's presence grew more and more obnoxious to me as the days passed, and it was very seldom that I even looked at him, lest I should be compelled to cry out in my despair, "You murderer," as I then considered him nothing more nor less than one.

While undergoing this mental strain my mother was stricken down upon a bed of sickness, and after five weeks of the most intense suffering her attending physician informed us that the end was nigh. But father, thinking perhaps there was yet a chance for her recovery, wired Dr. McGuire, of Richmond, to come at once to her bedside. Immediately upon his arrival he also informed us that we need not entertain the least particle of hope in regard to his being able to prolong her life for any length of time, as the disease had assumed a malignant form, therefore he could do nothing. The noted physician informed mother as to her critical condition, and after doing so she insisted that he perform an operation upon her body, as she was very anxious to ascertain the cause of her suffering.

On performing the operation it was found that mother's suffering was caused by an immense tumor, and to remove it would be instant death, so we were obliged to let nature take its course and await the result.

A few weeks previous to mother's being stricken down with this terrible disease my sister Flora had promised her heart and hand in marriage, and when mother learned that it was beyond all earthly aid to prolong her life she insisted that the wedding take place immediately, as she could then die better satisfied, knowing that her child would still have a protector when her dearest friend had passed away.

We did everything within our power to please and comfort our beloved parent during the last few days allotted her upon earth, so sister and I began making preparations for her wedding. We at first decided that it should take place at home in the parlor, in order that mother might be an eye-witness to the marriage ceremony. But, as the event drew near she grew much worse and it was thought best not to excite her any more than necessary, and that it would be advisable for us to repair to the Baptist church in order to have the marriage rites solemnized.

It was on the 10th of November, 1886. I can almost see sister now as she came stepping down the aisle to the sweet strains of the wedding march and leaning upon the arm of W. R. Meroney, who was soon to become her protector through life. I prayed very earnestly for the moment that my fate would not be hers also. I afterwards felt that my prayer was answered, as Flora always appeared contented and happy during her married state.

She was perfectly devoted to her husband and children; never seemed happier than when engaged in

doing some little act of kindness for them, and as the *Salisbury News* remarked, in speaking of her death in after years, that no husband nor children ever had a more devoted wife and mother. Her life was completely wrapped up in them and she gave herself as a sacrifice for the life of her boy.

Upon our return home from church, after sister's marriage ceremony had been performed, we found mother very ill indeed. It was at first thought she would not survive until morning, but she again rallied and remained with us for several days afterward.

During this time she suffered the most excruciating pain. Everything was done for her that loving hands could do, and we at last realized that we could do no more, but would be compelled to bid farewell to the dearest friend we had on earth. It was very sad indeed to think that mother would never meet us again at the door with her bright smile and cheerful voice, saying, "Come in." But such must be before the end of time.

Then there was one great consolation, and that was our mother was perfectly willing and prepared to go, and no doubt rests peacefully to-day in heaven, free from all earthly sorrow and cares.

The day before mother passed away, she called us one at a time to her bedside and asked for the assurance that we would all try to meet her in the home above. After receiving this promise she turned to father and said to him, "Pa, take good care of my baby Nell; be both father and mother to her, as she will have no one to look to now but you; therefore see that you do your duty, lest some sad fate befall our child, and cause your gray hairs to be brought down in sorrow to the grave."

On the day following these remarks, between 12

and 1 o'clock p. m., mother breathed her last. She died just as if though she were falling into a quiet and peaceful slumber.

I remained standing by her bedside for a few moments afterward, then left the room and never beheld her face again. On account of John's being ordered out of the house by my father, of course I accompanied him; was it not my duty to do so, as years before I had given up parents and everything dear to me; yes, all for my husband's sake?

I was afterwards told that mother's remains were beautiful to behold, as she lay within her casket awaiting burial.

We laid her to rest beside my sister Eva in the family plot in the cemetery, and wondering all the while which one of us would follow next.

I did not return to my old home for several months after this sad event, and when I did I found another reigning in my own mother's place.

This strange woman afterward proved herself to be a very cruel step-mother, as all of you will see. She formed a great dislike for Sister Nell, and began treating her harshly almost from the very day she entered my father's residence.

Sister was not even allowed the privilege of having her friends visit her. If they did attempt such a thing they were ordered out of the house immediately by father's second wife. She always forbade them coming back again. She also forbade me putting my foot inside the door, and told me that if I persisted in doing so she would blow my brains out with her pistol; and, in fact, at one time she snapped it in my face, saying, "I will not only put one ball into you, but three."

Sister Nell had always been accustomed to having

her own way around home, and now the place seemed more like a prison to her than anything else. Finally, she was driven away from the old nest entirely by our cruel step-mother, and my heart sinks within me when I think of the sister who wanders alone to-day, God only knows where.

CHAPTER III.

IN MY OWN HOME.

A short time after my father's second marriage my husband bought from R. D. Mosley a lovely plot of ground and built thereon a two-story dwelling. You can have no conception of how delighted I was on hearing that I was going to have a real home of my own.

While the building was undergoing construction, John and I used to take a stroll in that direction nearly every Sabbath evening, in order to behold what progress the workmen had made during the week.

I always insisted upon these visits, as I was very anxious for the time to arrive when we would be comfortably domiciled in our new abode.

A few months previous to our residence being completed my feelings were very badly wounded on account of a wrong committed by the husband I at one time loved so dearly.

He was then employed by D. D. Schouler as auctioneer, and came home to dinner one day bearing a large package in his arms, with no address written upon it. Of course I made sure the bundle was for me and began untying it immediately. All at once John frightened me by saying, "I wish you would let those things alone, as they don't belong to you, but to a young lady who is stopping with Mrs. Britz in Salem."

I thought very strange of there being no address upon the package and told my husband so. He then became angry and said, "I do know in my soul you

missed your calling when you married me. You ought to have remained single and have practiced law or gotten a position as a detective. I think you could have realized a nice little sum from either occupation."

I told John that I did not intend making him angry when I asked why there was no address upon the package; only thought it a singular affair, and that was why I had questioned him so closely; but, so long as he had become offended at my remarks, he could just use his own pleasure in regard to getting into a good humor again, as I didn't care which way the wind blew.

After finishing his noonday meal he immediately left home for the purpose of delivering this mysterious bundle. We were then occupying a little four-roomed cottage on Park avenue, and in order to reach Mr. Britz's residence John took the path leading down to the schoolgirls' play ground, our former trysting place, you remember; but things were changed from what they were in days gone by.

I had formed a habit of following my husband to the door whenever he left home, in order to receive his parting kiss, but this time he took no notice of me whatever, just passed out without saying a word. I remained standing in the doorway, looking after him and brushing away the tears that were trickling down my cheeks and feeling as if though I were entirely forsaken by everyone.

Just as my husband was turning a curve in the road I noticed a dark-haired female emerge from the bushes and follow in the direction he had gone. I at first thought nothing of this until I discovered that she was conversing with three young gentlemen who happened to be coming up the path. After giving

this vile creature the information she had asked they passed my residence. As they did so I heard one of them say, "I wonder why she wanted to know which way John Beard went?"

Then I knew who was to receive the package I had thought my own, but, at the same time, hated to believe John guilty of such an act; so I made up my mind not to censure him too severe until I had given him a chance to vindicate himself in regard to the matter.

I was very nervous all that afternoon, and to make things still worse Basil, the younger of my two boys, was taken ill and I was compelled to send Robah post-haste in search of his father. He was not at his place of business, but was afterwards found down at Shaffner's ice pond skating with a bevy of young ladies and positively refused to accompany Robah home in order to assist me in attending to the wants of our sick child. He did not return until about 11 o'clock that night, and when he entered the door I did not speak, but gave him one long look, which spoke louder than words, and I think he will remember it to his dying day.

After retiring my husband tried to smooth everything over by explaining why it was that he was found at the pond instead of being at the store. He told me that he happened to meet Mr. Britz on the street and he informed him that the young lady who was to receive the package was not at home but at Shaffner's ice pond skating, so he turned in that direction instead of going on to Mr. B.'s residence.

I said, "Well, now, what excuse can you give for not coming home when sent for?"

He replied to me by saying, "There goes the lawyer again. That's so; I had forgotten about your being a near relative to the famous Newton Crumpler."

These remarks only provoked me, and I said, "You may thank your God if you only become as smart a man as he proved himself to be, so do not cast any more of your insinuations at me, if you please, as I have a little crow to pick with you, anyhow."

I did not pick the crow that night, as baby was very ill, but next morning I made the feathers fly. The incident reminded me of Lord Byron accusing his wife of her infidelity. I make this comparison on account of the expression on my husband's face being the same as that of Bryon's untrue wife as she knelt at his feet, trying to make some plausible excuse in regard to her past conduct and at the same time imploring his forgiveness.

A few days after this occurrence I was stricken down with a severe case of diphtheria, which lasted nearly four weeks. During this time I was treated in the most brutal manner by my noble protector. One evening he dropped the phial containing a wash for my throat. This raised his ire and he remarked that I could do without having my throat painted until morning, as he did not intend returning to the drug store for more medicine that night.

Now, I fully understood the nature of my disease and knew that unless it received close attention death would be the result, so I insisted on John's returning once more to the druggist, in order to obtain something that would alleviate my suffering. This he refused to do, and on the following day when the physician arrived he found me suffering very much indeed, and after telling how many hours had passed since my throat received treatment, he looked John straight in the face and said, "Well, do you intend letting her die from want of attention?"

My husband then remarked that he did not see any

use of buying such expensive medicine when he could manufacture the same from the little red balls that grew upon oak trees.

The Sabbath that I lay almost at Death's door my husband remained away from home all day, leaving no one but a little girl to attend to my wants. I suppose I would have died if it had not been for the attention I received from Mrs. F. E. Heckard and Miss Ola Leak, neighbor ladies. They did everything within their power to comfort me, and my life was spared, although contrary to John's wishes, I suppose.

As soon as I was able to be up and around in my room I began packing, preparatory to moving into our new residence, and hoping all the while that there would be a great change in regard to my husband's mode of living. At one time I felt as if though there was going to be, as he erected a family altar and seemed to be doing better. He only continued in the right path for three days, then fell back into the old way again.

He afterwards remarked that he had only been holding prayers as a blind and nothing more, so all that I had hoped for was like the foundation built upon the sand—soon washed away—and the home that I had looked forward to as being one of peace and happiness was destined to be as the others had been, so I made up my mind to become reconciled to it all, although it was very hard at first for me to do so. After building the number of air castles I had in the past, all the real pleasure I had was in keeping my house and children neat and clean. I also took great delight in raising different kinds of fowls and had quite a number of them around my door.

One evening Brother Brown, our beloved pastor, called to see me, and remarked that my home

reminded him of a little farm and one that was well kept. Oh! how I longed for a companion in this home, but my husband was never to be one to me. I used to nearly burn my face into a crisp while engaged in preparing his meals over the hot stove. The thanks I received for this was a cruel remark, which hurt me more than a blow would have done. He would say on his return home to dinner, "Why, Ida, your face reminds me of an old turkey gobbler," on account of its looking so red.

I always replied to him in this way, "Well, John, if you were compelled to remain over the hot stove for the same length of time that I am, your face would be red, too."

How much further one word of praise would have gone instead of these cutting remarks! Husbands, if such you be, who happen to read what I have written, let me implore you to speak kindly to the wife of your bosom. You have no idea how many privations she endures for your sake, and one cross word from you whom she adores often cuts keener than a knife to her heart and causes her to regret the day she became your bride.

I was compelled to make this assertion many, many times during my married life. During my house-keeping period my husband would never allow me to live anywhere except in the suburbs of our city, and said that he did not intend dressing me up in the latest style for some other fellow to fall in love with. I used to say to him, "Why, John, you ought to be more than ashamed of yourself for even mentioning such a thing, when you know that I live for you and you only, and, as I am of a domestic turn of mind, take great delight in remaining at home in order to keep everything neat and clean."

I always tried to have a certain day and hour in which my work must be done. I suppose I inherited this trait from my mother. She was of German descent and believed in doing everything systematically. I also had a place for each and ever article about the house. John often remarked to his friends that he believed I was losing my mind on the subject of housekeeping, and that I reminded him of a clean devil. These remarks would bring the tears to my eyes. After working hard to please the man I fairly worshipped, my feelings were very often wounded on account of John's taking no notice whatever of the different articles of fancy work I made with my own hands and placed within our room. I would always call his attention to the things first before he would say one word in any shape or form, then it would be something like this, "Oh! Ida, you know that I do not care for fancy work and such things; so you need not trouble yourself about making any more for my benefit."

Now, why couldn't he have said, "Yes, the things are very nice indeed, and my little wife was very smart to make them for her old John boy," then I would have felt as if though I had something to live for, but as it was, I almost wished for death, and more than once was tempted to exclaim, "Is there a just God or no?"

It seemed to me as if though I had more than my share of trouble, especially for one so frail as I.

About this time I was thrown into a very excited frame of mind on account of my Sister Nell disappearing suddenly from her home. She was persuaded away by our step-mother's daughter, Octavia Wellons. What Miss Wellon's motives were for causing all this trouble will remain a secret, I suppose, until

the end of time; but there's one thing I will say, and that is, she broke my father's heart. He never seemed to rally from that time forth, and I think his mind was badly impaired on account of it—in fact, he at one time told me so, and said that he did not care how soon death relieved him of his sufferings. Oh! why can't those who suffer die; but, instead, they live on and on for an unlimited length of time.

Miss Wellons not only broke my father's heart but caused me a great deal of anxiety. I will never forget the many sleepless nights I passed, neither will I forget how I stood in the Western Union Telegraph office anxiously awaiting the welcome message from Detective Pfhof and my husband that sister was found and on her way home.

When the glad tidings reached my ear that such was the case I felt as if though I must run to mother and clasp my arms around her neck, saying, "Thank God, Nell still lives and will soon be with us once more."

But, oh! how sad when the thought occurred to me that mother was not at the old home to welcome her child as of yore. So I wired Sister Flora at Salisbury and she came at once. Such a reunion was never known. I will not go into details in regard to Nellie's flight, as I deem it sufficient to say that she had quite a hazardous one; was found in a penniless condition, and on account of being hatless was held a prisoner at the Cortenia Hotel in Covington, Ky., and was more than glad to be released from her situation.

I made up my mind that on her return she should find a home with me during the remainder of her young life, but father would not consent to this, so she was again placed under her cruel step-mother's control, only to cause me more trouble in days that were to follow.

Our step-mother declared that Nell should never rest in peace while the blood was warm in her head. She also said that she would never be satisfied until she saw sister laid in her casket—ready for the grave.

Well, I must say that I feel now as if though my trouble was just beginning.

At that period of my life it was then that John insisted that we dispose of our residence in order that he might go into business for himself. Whenever he saw my father coming to see us he would say, "Now, Ida, yonder comes your pa, and I want you to say to him when he gets here that you are anxious to break up housekeeping and try boarding for awhile, as you are not very strong and think a little rest would do you good."

I asked my husband why he wanted me to say all this to father. He said, "Oh, well, I just don't want him to think that I am anxious to sell the property after his giving us the painting of the house."

John told me that if I would agree to dispose of our home he would pay me \$100 to sign the deed and that I should be placed under Dr. McGuire at Richmond for treatment, as I was then very nervous. At the same time he insisted on me having my life insured for his benefit. I finally agreed to sign the deed for \$100, but told him in plain English that I would never consent to having my life insured for his benefit, nor no one else, as I didn't believe in it.

This did not seem to set well with him, and he made a few profane remarks, which I took no notice of whatever, but told him I did not care much whether we disposed of our home or not, unless we could realize some clean capital by the sale of it.

He said, "Well, I am now corresponding with H. J. Thomas, a practicing physician of Wisconsin, who

is very anxious to locate somewhere down South, and thinks our little city the place for him. No doubt he will be the purchaser of our home. In the meantime we will break up housekeeping and advertise the property for rent. I do not think it will be a difficult matter to find a tenant for a place like this."

The day following the advertisement John came rushing into the dining-room, saying, "Mamma, what do you think? I have had an applicant for the house already." Of course I was curious to know who it was and insisted on my husband's telling me. After his doing so I said, "Well, do as you think best about the matter, but you know the reputation this widow bears in regard to paying her debts, and I believe if I were in your place I would look around for someone else."

John then turned red in the face and told me to shut up, as he intended giving the widow permission to move into our house, and, furthermore, was not going to charge her one cent of rent.

These remarks raised my ire a little too much and I said, "Yes, I would just like for you to attempt such a thing, I would soon show you the fruits of a pine torch."

My husband left home immediately after this. I suppose he did so in order to inform his tenant as to what had been said between he and I in regard to her taking possession of the house.

That night he returned home from the store as pleased as a basket of chips, and wanted to know how soon I would be ready to move down street. I said, "Oh, well, if I must I must, and will try and arrange it so that we can move by the first or middle of June," but, oh, how I did hate to leave the home I called my own. At the same time I thought it best to obey the

man whose name I bore, so made no more fuss about the matter, and on the 16th of June, 1890, we broke up housekeeping and obtained board with Mrs. Rose Williams, who ran the City Hotel on Main street, over Jacobs' clothing store.

We had only been installed in our new quarters about a week when one morning my husband came to breakfast and informed me that D. D. Schouler, his employer, had discharged him on my account.

I said, "What have I done that would cause Schouler to discharge you?" He refused to answer my question, and I then told him that I intended going over to investigate the matter myself. He forbade me doing so, and I have remained in the dark ever since as to why he received his dismissal.

We remained with Mrs. Williams six months. Then she informed us that we must pay more than fifty dollars per month for board. I told her that we were not willing to do so and that I would look around for another place, which I did, and secured very nice board and lodging with Mrs. Elizabeth Rierson, in the Buxton Block, on Liberty street. I would have been very happy in my new home if John had acted as he ought to have done, but instead he gave me a great deal of trouble on account of his mode of living. He always pretended to the outside world that he was perfectly devoted to me, but such was not the case.

Oh! the profane language I was compelled to endure on his return home at night. I remember once of his not making his appearance in my room until 2 o'clock in the morning, and when I questioned him as to why he had remained out until this late hour, he began cursing and told me that it was none of my d—— business where he had been, as he was a man of his own, and generally went and came when he

pleased. He finally cooled down long enough to say that as it was a pretty moonlight night he had been showing a shoe salesman over our city. I asked him whether he thought I was fool enough to believe such a story. I said, "You might tell such things to the marines, but not to me."

He then began cursing again at such a rate that Mrs. Rierson was forced to call in Policeman Hanner to quiet him. When Mr. Hanner came to our door, John pointed a pistol right in his face, and told him to carry himself back down on the street, or he would blow his brains out. The policeman did as requested, but I think it was on my account. Then John said, "Now, Ida, if they try to arrest me to-morrow, you must tell them that I had a nightmare, and that was why I raised such a racket." So I passed the following day almost in agony, for fear I would be compelled to commit this awful sin in order to shield my husband.

John never allowed me to go anywhere unless he was with me. All that he had to say was, "Ida, you can't go," and that was sufficient. I never asked the second time.

One evening Mrs. Rierson insisted on me accompanying her to church. I promised to do so, but when I learned that it was against my husband's wishes, I complained of a severe headache and remained in my room instead of fulfilling the promise I had made.

Oh! why did I do all this for one who appreciated it so little, and afterward cast me aside for another when I grew old.

Another trait of John's was to fly into a passion in a minute if I happened to address in a friendly manner either of the young salesmen employed in our

store. He formed a great dislike for Allie Hege especially. Why it was, I do not know, for I always looked upon Allie as a mere child, and treated him as such.

One evening, while at the Rierson House, the children and I were sitting out on the balcony enjoying some frozen cream. All at once young Hege passed and said, "Why, good evening, Mrs. Beard; what are you all doing up there?"

I told him that we were trying to keep cool, and insisted on his partaking of a saucer of cream also.

I didn't think there would be any harm in doing this; only thought I was doing something in return for his kindness towards Basil. Allie had not more than seated himself in our midst when my husband happened to step out on the pavement in front of his place of business, and, I supposed, noticed some one besides the children on the balcony with me.

I tell you the store was closed early for one time, and I enjoyed John's society during the remainder of the evening. He treated our guest politely while with us, but no sooner than he was out of sight my husband began cursing at a terrific rate, and threatened to discharge young Hege on the following morning.

Now, I thought I had borne enough, and told John so. I said, "You ought to be ashamed of yourself for censuring me as you have during the last five minutes, when you know that I only regard Allie as a boy and treat him accordingly."

My husband not only objected to my treating Allie in a cordial manner, but young Crowell also. At one time he lay sick at the Rierson in a room adjoining our room, and while suffering from the effects of a high fever he called for water. I knew there was no

one to wait upon him, and I did so myself by placing a pitcher of ice water on the outside of his door. For this act I received the most unmerciful scolding from John. I told him I did not mean any harm by placing the water at the door; was only anxious to do something for Mr. Crowell, as he was suffering and here among strangers.

The following morning my cousin sent me a beautiful box of flowers and cake. Having more than I desired for my own use, thought I would cheer the young bookkeeper up a bit by letting Basil carry him some of both. The minute I had sent the things I said to myself, "Now I will catch it again," so sat down to await John's return home from the store. When he came, I told him what I had done, and said, "Now, I do hope you will not scold me for this little act of kindness, when it was only to brighten up a poor sick boy's room."

My husband began cursing as usual, and said, "Ida, try it once more, and I will leave you, so help me God."

Well, now I have given you some idea of my life at the Rierson House. After boarding at the above named place for nearly two years, we at last had a little misunderstanding—on account of the children. We then tried boarding with Mrs. Westbrook, a cousin of John's; but this did not last long, as she and I could not get along at all.

On leaving Mrs. Westbrook's residence, we moved to the Jones House, and I must say that some of the happiest moments of my married life were spent with this hospitable family. It seemed as if though they could never do enough for us.

On going to the Jones House, the proprietor informed us that he could not give us a room in the

main building, as every one was then occupied, but would let us have a little brick structure formerly known as Judge Wilson's law office. We accepted the offer, and moved in at once.

I said to John, "Now, do please let's begin life anew, and I want you to assist me in arranging our furniture in the room"; but once more he refused to do so, and told me that he was willing to hire Mr. Samuel Miller for the purpose; so, with Mr. Miller's aid I soon had a cosy little nest; but, oh, how much more I would have appreciated my husband's assistance!

Everyone thought me perfectly happy while at the Jones House, but alas! I was not. It's true, my husband was doing a prosperous business, known as Old Cheap John, and my surroundings were comfortable, but, after all, this did not constitute happiness.

As the days passed, I realized that my husband was growing from bad to worse, and knew that unless there was a change, and that quickly, he would be entirely lost, so I plead with him to turn over a new leaf and do away with the accursed opium and bromoseltzer habit.

But my pleadings were all in vain. He told me that he intended eating opium and drinking bromoseltzer as long as he lived. Then it was I gave up all hope of redeeming the man I had clung to through poverty and prosperity for so many years.

But still I said to myself, "I'll be true to him, whether he is to me or not"; and now I feel that I did my duty as a wife until the last. I never remained away from John a single day or night during our married life. Perhaps it would have been a great deal better for me if I had, then he would have known how to appreciate me all the more on my return.

During my stay at the Jones House, John seemed very attentive to me in public, and no one would have thought but what we were as happy as the boy and girl lovers of former years. But things are seldom what they seem, or at least it was so with me, for instead of being happy, I was the most miserable creature on earth, and made so by my husband's acts.

The little nest I had taken such an interest in now seemed almost a prison, and I was really glad when I heard that Mr. Jones had leased the old Merchants' Hotel and intended moving there in a short while. I knew that we would not be able to pay the price he would ask for board, and hoped that John would return to housekeeping; but this he refused to do, and declared that he would move to the hotel if he only remained six weeks.

I then insisted on our remaining with Mrs. Hanes, as she was going to take possession of the house after it was vacated by Mr. Jones. My husband said no; I must do just as he wanted me to whether I was inclined to do so or not.

I said, "Well, John, you know that I would be delighted to move over to the hotel, but, at the same time, I am afraid the change will cause us lots of trouble, as your business affairs are in a very shaky condition at present, and I would much rather go to housekeeping or remain with Mrs. Hanes, as I do not care to have all the blame cast upon me if you should happen to fail."

John said, "Oh, I don't think there is any danger of a failure soon, unless that times get worse than they are now."

I felt as if though something was at the back of all this, and insisted once more on our remaining where we were, but, like always, my husband had his own

way, and on to the hotel we went, only to remain for the short period of six weeks.

Then the long predicted Cheap John failure came, much to the delight of many of our enemies, for I really believe there were many who rejoiced at our downfall and envied me my position while seemingly happy and prosperous.

Oh! if they could only have changed places with me for five minutes, I think they would have entertained different feelings toward poor little heart-broken me.

My life at Hotel Jones was anything but a pleasant one. I passed the days in sadness, feeling all the while as a caged bird longing for its freedom. I tried to appear bright and happy while in the presence of those around me, and none would have ever known but what I was the gayest of the gay. But oh! the heavy heart I carried within my bosom, as John never cared to please me in anything, but would worry and contrary me as much as possible.

To show you that my statements are true, I will relate a little incident that occurred during my stay at Hotel Jones. On the eve of the grand reception, the ladies of the house requested me to assist in receiving the guests. I knew this would be very much against my husband's wishes; however, I made up my mind to have something to say in regard to the matter for once, if it caused a separation between John and myself. But after receiving a volley of oaths from my noble admirer, I promised him I would have nothing to do with the affair whatever, but would remain in my room and make some plausible excuse for not assisting in the work for the evening.

This seemed to please him, and he said, "Well, I think it will be more in keeping with your position

as a married woman, and I will be home early in order to accompany you down to supper."

As the hour approached for the guests to arrive, I dressed myself with care and sat down by the window to await John's return, but he came not in time for supper. It was after 11 o'clock before he made his appearance at all. I was compelled to go down to the dining room alone, everyone asking me where my husband was. I scarcely knew what to say at first, but after thinking for a moment, I told them that he had been called away on business, and it was of such a nature that it would necessitate his remaining until late in the evening. Now, I knew nothing of John's whereabouts, but thought I would give the above excuse to the guests around me.

On John's return home, he said, "Well, now I guess I am even with you for promising to assist in this affair. For my part, I have spent a pleasant evening out at South Side with a lady friend of mine, while you have passed the hours here all by yourself."

I had gotten over my angry spell on account of being disappointed, and now appeared cool and collected, so I said, "Well, John, I rather like being left alone sometimes, but I do think you acted very ungentlemanly in not keeping your promise on this special occasion, so that I would not have been placed in such an embarrassing position."

My husband said, "That's just exactly the way I intended you to be, and I remained away on purpose."

I made no reply to his remarks, but retired early, feeling as if though I did not care whether I lived to see another sunrise. I almost wished I would not, and if it had not been for the sweet strains of music that reached my ear from the parlor below, I believe I would have prayed God to take my life into His keeping ere another morning dawned.

But as it was, the music awoke within me memories of home, sweet home. Yes, and other days.

One occasion I recall to mind especially. It was on an evening just like this, and I, dressed all in white, stood beneath a beautiful arch of flowers, assisting in receiving seventy-five guests who were assembling together within the portals of my father's residence in order to participate in the festivities being held in honor of my sixteenth birthday. I was made Queen of all.

Capt. J. D. Burch, of the W. L. I., afterwards remarked that I would never look fairer when a bride. His remarks caused me to tremble as the noble aspen did when she heard the woodmen coming with their axes through the forest in search of timbers for to make the cross on which Christ was to be crucified. Yes, I trembled on hearing the name of bride mentioned, as it reminded me of an incident which occurred a few months previous to this event. Then it was that I beheld a very dear cousin of mine standing amid relatives and friends bedecked in her bridal array and awaiting the groom who came not, on account of being persuaded by his companions to desert at the last moment the girl who was to have become his bride. I assisted in disrobing her of the garments she had taken such an interest in preparing. She tossed them aside and with a maniac smile exclaimed, "I do not care, why should I? he wasn't worth one thought of mine." I knew that the smile came from her lips alone, and that deep down within her heart there lurked an aching pain which no earthly aid could ever reach and naught but time would heal. I said to myself, "I have no desire to become a wife, but with my cat, books, birds and flowers, remain an old maid until my dying day." About this time John

returned, and with his smooth tongue and winning ways soon won me for his bride. Oh! why did not my mind revert to childhood days instead, yes, to the happy hours I, with Sister Flora, spent beneath the roof of what was familiarly known as old Billy's cabin. He was a half-witted old fellow who had been in father's employ almost from my cradle up, and everything I did or said was all right with him. He has passed away since the time I have reference to, and in thinking of him somehow or other I always feel that I was the sole cause of his having a shelter over his head during his latter days.

Once upon a time when the old free school house in which I learned the English alphabet was being torn away in order to be replaced by a newer one, I insisted upon father's purchasing the former and presenting it to Billy for a home. Father did as I requested him to do, and afterwards said to me, "Now that old Billy has the material for a house, where do you suppose he will build it?" I thought for a moment, then exclaimed, "Why, papa, let's make him a present also of that lovely little plot of ground just beyond our fish pond, where sister and I always gather our Christmas evergreens, and owing to its having a clear, cool spring upon it, I think it the very spot for Billy's home." Father then promised to make him a deed to the place right away that evening, so I threw my arms around his neck, kissing him once, twice, thrice; then away to the field I flew to inform Billy of the bright fortune in store for him.

The poor old fellow was almost overcome with joy, and, throwing down a sack half filled with peas, began dancing at such a rate that I told him if he did not mind mother's peas would be shelled before they were thoroughly dry. He said, "All right, Cricket,

I will be careful, and to-night I'll play you a tune on my dulcimer; just see if I don't." I have always wondered why he called me Cricket. I suppose it was on account of my quick way of speaking and jumping around.

The day following my conversation with father, he gave instructions to another of his hirelings to place upon the spot already designated the material for Billy's house, and with the aid of a few kind neighbors, the old man and his wife were comfortably domiciled for the winter. The first Christmas they spent together beneath their own roof was long to be remembered by them.

Mother had promised me a grand surprise for this aged couple, so I arose early, and, after donning my red hood and mittens to correspond, I filled a basket with everything nice from our pantry, and with a heart light as the thistledown, set out through the snow for old Billy's cabin. I suppose I would have reminded one of Little Red Riding Hood. Then, too, I was going to keep the hungry wolf from the door that morning. On reaching the cabin, I rapped loudly and said, "Santa Claus, your best friend has called to see you; so open the door quickly or he will freeze."

I waited until I heard Billy coming toward the door, then ran away to hide myself in the chimney corner, and afterward heard him say, "I just bet that Mrs. Crumpley sent this basket, and I wonder where Cricket is? Let me look for her."

He pretended not to see me at first; so I made up my mind to scare him by saying, "Christmas gift, Uncle Billy!" He spread his large mouth from ear to ear, and insisted on my coming in to the fire. I was feeling very cold by this time, and glad to accept of his hospitality. After I had gotten thoroughly

warm, he drew forth his dulcimer and began playing "Dixie"—my Christmas gift, he said. I appreciated his efforts in trying to please me so much that I remained longer than mother had given me permission to, and father, becoming uneasy, came in search of me. He found me sitting down at old Billy's feet, listening to his music and all kinds of queer stories. But the moment I beheld father, I said, "Oh! I must be going." So up I sprang, and after calling for my basket, I bade the old couple a merry Christmas, and, in company with father, was soon homeward bound, leaving Billy and his wife to enjoy the good things left them by their little Cricket.

There are a great many more things I would like to mention in regard to the pleasant hours spent with this aged pair, but I must now return to my life at Hotel Jones.

The morning following the reception, my husband arose at 10 o'clock in a terrible rage, and declared that he would spend the remaining portion of the day at South Side. I told him to go ahead, as I supposed Mr. Hege would manage the business just as well alone—or, at least, had been doing so for six months—although very much against his wishes. I also remarked to John that he had better be in a hurry about starting, or the day would be far spent before reaching his destination. This caused him to fly into a passion, and he said, "Oh, well, you need not talk so smart, as your comb will be cut in a few days on account of hearing of our failure. And you are the cause of it all. Just think! Here you are, boarding at the hotel and cutting a swell!"

I said, "Now, John, stop right where you are, and listen to me a few minutes. I think I am capable of having a word or two to say in regard to the matter.

So far as your intended failure is concerned, I am not at all surprised at it, as I have been expecting something of the kind for quite awhile; but there's one thing certain, you can not blame me for being the cause of your downfall. I knew before moving to the hotel that if you should happen to fail, I would be accused of being the cause of it, and that was why I insisted on our going to housekeeping or remaining with Mrs. Hanes for awhile, at least until you could see how things were going. So, now, I don't want you to censure me for being the cause of all your trouble, when I consider that you are as much, if not more, to blame than I am. Had you listened to me instead of having your own headlong way, both of us would be a great deal better off. And there are several other things I would like to remind you of. How about your bicycles, guns, dogs, etc.? I suppose I was the sole cause of your having them also, was I not? You know that it has cost you no little sum to board your lovely little canine family here and elsewhere for the last six years, and I think it's high time you cease your everlasting hunting expeditions, when they cost you ten dollars or more, on account of your paying railroad fare for dogs and friends who accompanied you. Then, every time there is a bicycle race, ten dollars more must come out of your pocket, so that you will be in the swim with the rest of the boys.

"The very idea of your having two \$150 bicycles, and two \$35 guns in your possession at one time, not mentioning your \$9 watch chain, \$10 ring, \$5 silver-headed cane, and a thousand other things. I think it perfectly awful that you paid \$25 for one of your bird dogs. Then, you remember, you paid \$25 more for a hair tonic, which never did your bald head a

particle of good. No wonder your business has gone to wreck, and still I am to blame for it all, or, at least, you are trying to make it appear so to the outside world."

This ended our conversation for the day, and nothing more was said about the failure until several weeks afterwards. Then, all at once, one morning, Duncan Jeffreys, our porter, came to my room with a note from my husband, in which he requested me to come to his place of business immediately, as he was very anxious to have some copying done. On reaching the store I soon learned that John had nothing whatever for me to do in the way of copying, but wanted me to select quite a number of articles needed in housekeeping. My husband asked me to follow him into the rear part of the store. After doing so, he said, "Now, Ida, listen carefully to what I have to say. You are aware of the fact that our business affairs are in a shaky condition. I see no prospect of pulling through the panic, and Jeff Grogan says that now is the time for us to select from the stock whatever we will need. If we tarry long about the matter, our doors will be closed by the Sheriff, and we will be left out in the cold world alone; so take my advice, and let's get to work before it's too late."

I looked my husband straight in the face and said, "No, sir. I will not dishonor the mother who bore me by being your accomplice in this affair; but I will leave the State's uniform for you, your father, and your noble attorney, Jefferson Grogan, to wear."

With these remarks, I left the store and returned to the hotel. Just as I was leaving our place of business I heard my father-in-law say:

"John, if I were in your place, I would leave Ida before sundown. I would live with no woman who

refused to do as I said. The very idea of her not trying to assist you in getting out of this scrape, when it would be to her interest as well as your own."

After reaching my room at the hotel, I burst out crying and said to myself:

"Oh, if I only had a good, honest husband!"

On his return home that night he seemed as jolly as ever, and told me he didn't mean any harm by saying what he did around at the store—was just joking about the matter and nothing more.

A few days after this occurrence, our porter came to my room and presented me with a letter, supposed to be from Mrs. Charles Agee, who was then residing at Bluefield, W. Va.

The letter ran as follows:

Dear Sister and Brother:

As you failed to send Charlie and I a Christmas present, we make bold to ask you for something now, at this late day. We are sadly in need of several pieces of crockery, and as Ada is a good judge of such things, will leave it to her to select them.

Charlie also requests me to say that he thinks this a splendid point to open up a branch Cheap John Store. So study over the matter, and if you decide to do business in our city, he will manage everything for you.

Hoping to hear from you soon, I remain your loving sister,

JENNIE.

After I had finished reading the letter, our porter told me that Mr. Beard wanted to see me right away; so I put on my hat and went around to the store. On entering, John said:

"Well, Ida, did you read Jennie's letter?"

I answered in the affirmative, and at the same time told him I didn't think we ought to send the things just then; but John said "now or never," and began placing several pieces of crockery upon the counter.

He worked on for awhile, and then asked me to

select something I thought his sister would like. Of course, I just supposed the letter I had received was from Jennie; therefore I did as my husband requested me by pointing to the different articles I imagined she would need in housekeeping, and never dreamed for a moment of anything wrong. The counter at last being full, John said:

“Well, I guess this will do, so far as the crockery is concerned; and now I want you to assist me in making a selection of some clothing and other things for Charlie to begin the store with.”

I refused to do this, and told him I did not see any use of our trying to run a store in Bluefield, when the one here was about to go under.

When my husband saw that I was not going to assist him in selecting the clothing, he told our porter to go down into the cellar and bring five large boxes, and pack into them the things already selected; then hire a dray and have them hauled to the Norfolk and Western depot, so that they would reach Mrs. Agee on the following day. After this, I left the store, and thought nothing more about the affair until a few days afterward. Then I asked Duncan whether he shipped the things to my sister-in-law. He said:

“No, ma’am, I did not; but placed them in old Mr. Beard’s basement, as he wanted to send his daughter a few things also.”

Our porter said that he did not see how anything more could be packed into the boxes, as they were already full.

After this, things seemed to be getting on nicely, and I was beginning to think we would yet weather the storm; when, all at once, I was again stricken down with grief, on account of receiving the sad intelligence of my sister Flora’s serious illness. I had

hardly finished reading the first message when another was handed me, stating that she was dead. The telegrams fell from my hands to the floor, and I said to myself, "Oh! that it was poor heart-broken me, instead of her, as she had something to live for, while I have nothing and long to be at rest."

But there was no time for thought. I knew that I must begin making preparations to attend her funeral, which was to take place on the following day. So, with the assistance of my friends, I was made ready; and that evening the 6 o'clock southbound train bore me away from our city to the historic little town of Salisbury, N. C. As the train dashed along, I whiled away the moments by wondering whether it could be possible that only two of us were left out of a family of ten children. I also recalled the many happy hours sister and I had spent together during our childhood days.

While thus engaged, the conductor called out "Linwood!" and my heart sank within me, for I knew that in a few minutes I would reach my destination, and be ushered into the presence of sister's remains.

On reaching her residence, I beheld the dim lights flickering here and there, plainly telling the old, old story, that the Angel of Death reigned within.

I was met at the door by my brother-in-law, and, after the usual greeting, was shown into the room where sister lay in her snowy casket, and also robed in array of equal whiteness, awaiting burial.

Flora's remains reminded me of that happy bride who, a few years before, had gone down the aisle, stepping lightly to the sweet strains of the wedding march, never dreaming for the moment of death—cruel death!—that was sure to come sooner or later.

The day following my arrival in Salisbury, we laid

sister to rest in the Lutheran Cemetery. As they lowered the casket into the grave, I said, "Now I must return to Winston and have no one to sympathize with me in my troubles."

It was always a great consolation for Flora and I to correspond with each other. Whenever anything unusual happened here at home, my first thoughts were of her. But now that our sisterly ties are severed, I must pass away the time as best I know how, until I, too, am called to follow in Flora's footsteps.

CHAPTER IV.

SOME OF JOHN'S RASCALITY.

On my return from Salisbury, I realized that soon our business must go under. So I made up my mind that if the worst came to the worst, that I would be ready to meet it all bravely. I told my husband that things might have been otherwise if he had acted differently, but as it was, I hoped there would yet be a way opened up for us, and that we would once more reach the topmost round of the ladder.

He said that he did not care whether we did or not, as he never expected to work any more, but would make an easy living if he had to do so by stealing. He told me that he was going to begin right away, as he had then started over to Gilmer, Marler & Co.'s to see if they would let him have a lot of goods on time. John said:

"Of course I never expect to pay for them, but that doesn't matter. And I also am going to beat W. L. Hill and D. D. Schouler for all I possibly can."

I said, "Why, John, you ought to be ashamed of yourself for committing such a deed, and furthermore, I don't see what good it will do you."

My husband then gave me his reason for wanting to obtain these goods. He said that the more he had in store when the failure came, the longer he would be able to hold a position, in order to close out the stock.

Well, John was successful in regard to obtaining goods from the firms already mentioned, and they lost quite a little sum when our failure occurred.

One thing more I will mention in connection with

our downfall before proceeding with my narrative. A few days previous to our failure, I happened to step into the store, and my husband called me to his desk and told me that he had caught young Crowell stealing from him.

I said, "Oh! perhaps you were mistaken, or at least I would hate to believe the young fellow guilty of such an act."

My husband then flew into a passion and said:

"Just believe what you please. I guess I know a thing when I see it with my own eyes. But of course you would be willing to believe someone else in preference to your husband."

I said, "No, not at all; but at the same time would rather give young Crowell the benefit of a doubt."

John began cursing, and said, "Well, I will be even with him yet, see if I don't. I intend telling him that I am in a very close place, and unless he will loan me \$35 to meet a sight draft, the business will go to thunder. Let me once get the money in my possession, and Crowell may whistle twice before ever receiving it back again. And there's another thing I will do that I may be even with him in full. He has authorized Rosenbacher to order him a suit of clothes, which will be here Saturday. I shall insist upon his taking the clothes, and also upon his wearing them Sunday. Then Saturday night I will make an assignment, and on Monday Crowell will be arrested for obtaining goods upon false pretense, and I guess that will put a quietus upon the little fellow."

All that I could say was—

"Why, John! What do you suppose will become of you for doing such a mean, low-down thing? Nothing but ill luck will follow you from this time forth."

He paid no attention to my remarks, but went ahead and did as he said he intended doing, and I suppose there are many within the Twin City who remember the arrest and trial and acquittal of young Crowell.

On the night my husband made an assignment, I could not sleep, but walked the floor of my room at Hotel Jones in an excited condition, for I knew that ere another morning dawned all would be over, and young Crowell's character at stake.

It was not until 2 a. m. that I heard John's footsteps upon the stairs. I turned on the lights and opened the door for him to enter. As he did so, he exclaimed:

"Well, everything is all O. K., and that rascal has the clothes in his possession. So, on Monday morning you will hear of his arrest. Ha! ha!"

The week following our failure, I left the hotel and went in search of another boarding place; for, of course, we could not remain with kind-hearted Mr. Jones any longer, although he requested us to do so until our business affairs were gotten into shape again.

Now, to show you that Mr. Jones was a kind-hearted man, we failed, owing him \$75, and I insisted on his taking my jewelry in part payment. This he refused to do, and told me to keep everything I had, and try to begin life anew. He also said that my husband and I would have his best wishes in all our undertakings.

On leaving Hotel Jones, we went to the Hanes House, and remained there about sixteen months. During this time I led a wretched life, as John was then past all redemption, and spent many of his leisure hours in reading Tom Paine's works, eating opium and drinking bromo-seltzer.

My husband always appeared very affectionate to-

ward me while in the presence of the boarders at the Hanes House; but one of them afterwards remarked to Mrs. Hanes that John and I would scarcely reach the door of our room before he would begin cursing and calling me all kinds of vile names, which I buried within my bosom and never divulged to anyone.

Reader, I would spare my husband if I could, but can not, as I feel that it would be impossible for me to paint him the dark villain that he is, if I were to try from now until the dawn of Judgment Day.

Shortly after moving to the Hanes House, John came rushing into my room and said:

"Ida, I want you to ask Mrs. Hanes whether she could let us have a place to store away some things."

My husband also told me to say to our landlady that the things he wanted to place in her care were my bridal presents.

I said, "John, I will do nothing of the kind, as I have no bridal presents, and you know it."

I then asked him what it was he intended bringing to the Hanes House, and he said:

"A wise wife will know nothing, but will do as her husband says."

I at last agreed to tell Mrs. Hanes that the boxes placed in her charge contained bridal presents, but did not say they were my own.

On the day my husband and I left Hotel Jones for the purpose of taking up our abode at the Hanes House, we passed right by the Wachovia Loan and Trust Company's bank. As we did so, John said:

"Ida, let's stop here a few minutes. I have something to show you."

We entered a private vault, and my husband said:

"Did you ever, in all your life, see as much money in one place?"

I said no, I never did, and wanted to know who it belonged to. I received no reply to my remarks at first, but afterwards John said:

"Well, if you must know everything, I will tell you. The money belongs to Jeff Grogan and myself."

I said, "Why did you fail when you had this amount of money on hand? But now that you have, I want you to go right away and pay Mr. Jones the \$75 we owe for board."

This made John angry. He began cursing and said "I will do nothing of the kind, but will let old man Jones stand a chance with the rest of the creditors, and I want you to keep mum about this money being here. Now, if you are a true wife you will merely look and say nothing, when you know that it will be to your interest to do so."

I said, "Well, John. You know that I would not give you away under any circumstances, but still it grieves me to know that you are guilty of all this dirty work, when there is no need of it. I now see why Jeff Grogan remained in our store most of the time before we failed. I also remember of his saying to you one morning that if you did decide to make an assignment not to forget him as you went along."

After we had been installed at our new boarding house for three months or more my husband leased for five years the storeroom adjoining the old Cheap John stand, and said that he intended opening up a china parlor therein, as his cousin, Peter Beard, was then travelling for a house of this kind, and would sell us ware cheaper than anyone else.

I told John I didn't believe an enterprise of this kind would pay in Winston, as several other parties were already engaged in the business. However, if he decided to open up the above-named store, I would

assist him all I possibly could by staying in our place myself and save him hiring a salesman. This I afterwards did, and never worked harder in all my life than on Christmas Eve of 1894. I disposed of \$21 worth of ware from 2 p. m. until 12 that night, and I made sure that my husband would at least thank me for the services rendered him during the day, but this he did not do. Neither did he offer me a single penny with which to purchase something for my own and the children's Christmas, and my feelings were badly wounded on account of it. However, I let it all pass and hoped for the better, but the better days never came. They grew worse and worse instead.

About a week previous to our opening up the china parlor, my husband came home to dinner one day and appeared to be in a very excited frame of mind. Upon entering our room he asked me whether my father had been there. I told him no, not that I knew of. He then said:

"Well, I do declare. It does look as though I have the worst luck in the world. Your father promised to meet me here at half-past 12 without fail, and it's nearly that time now." He had scarcely finished speaking when father stepped into the room, and exclaimed:

"Well, John, here I am. Now, be in a hurry about what you are going to do, as I have a little job of work to finish up for Fries this evening, and you know I am never behind time."

I did not know what to make of all this excitement, so sat still with mouth and eyes both wide open, until my husband said:

"Now, Mr. Crumpler, I want you to deposit this money in Ida's name, and tell Blair to let her have it in small quantities or all at once—just which way she may desire when calling for it."

I was completely thunderstruck, and wanted to know where the money came from. John told me that Mr. Will Blair loaned him \$400 that morning, and had given him three years in which to refund the money.

I thought it all true, and said :

"Oh, yes, I see. You want to leave the impression around at the bank that papa made me a present of the amount deposited." My husband laughed and said :

"Exactly so." He also said :

"Why, Ida, I have always thought that you would make a splendid detective; now I know it." Then I laughed and said :

"Well, perhaps I will be yet one, and be employed to hunt you up and bring you to justice for something you have done." Little did I think of the storm that was brewing in the future.

That evening when John returned home from the store, he came to me and said :

"Mamma, I have been feeling very badly over the falsehood I told to-day, and now I want to rectify it by telling you the truth. Blair did not loan me the money your father deposited in your name. You remember, I was only to receive \$10 per week for my services in closing out the old stock, but Jeff Grogan allowed me \$20—so you see the money was my own."

I said, "Well, I don't see how you could have saved up \$400 in this length of time if you did get \$20 per week, when we have been paying \$13 per week for board, and our laundry bill has been \$1.50 per week besides."

My husband said, "Well, well, little detective, believe what you please," and down the steps he went.

Now, what was I to think? I had been told two different stories in regard to the money matter. I was more than surprised at my father's taking any part whatever in the affair, after he had come so near losing his own home by indorsing John's note every month in order that he might carry on the Cheap John business. The last note my father indorsed for us he called to see me a few days before it was due, and said:

"Well, Ida, I just came to say that you all must get someone else to indorse for you next month, as I do not approve of John's spending most of his time on a bicycle and the other portion of it out with his gun and dogs hunting, while I am hard at work trying to keep him up, but will do so no longer, and you will see that I mean what I say."

Well, of course I did see, and so did everyone else, as our business soon went under and my husband with it.

During our stay at the Hanes House, John and I spent the day in several of the adjoining cities, namely: Greensboro, Mocksville, Wilkesboro and Roanoke. While on three of these excursions I was treated in the most cruel manner by the wretch whose name I bore. The first time was in Greensboro, at the Benbow House; he carried me to room No. 15, then left me with no one to converse with, and not even a book to read. On leaving me, John said:

"Now, Ida, remain right where you are, and I will be back within ten or fifteen minutes. I am only going down in the office to smoke a bit."

Now, to give you some idea of his minutes, I will say that he did not return until 5 o'clock that evening, and it was only 1 p. m. when he took his departure from the hotel. Upon his return he seemed anx-

ious to know how I had passed the time during his absence.

I said, "Oh, as well as could be expected, with nothing to do but sit here with folded hands, looking around and wondering where you were, and what you were doing."

John then remarked that it was my own fault if I had failed to pass the time pleasantly.

He said, "Why didn't you go out into the parlor with the rest of the ladies?"

I made no reply to his last remarks, but thought to myself that had I done so I never would have heard the last of it, as he had asked me to remain in my room.

I look back now and wonder why I made myself such a slave for him—not that I had the least desire to act in any way except as a true wife should, but at the same time deprived myself of many innocent pleasures, such as conversing with my own sex and treating the opposite one in a polite manner.

The second time I received cruel treatment from my husband was in Roanoke, at Hotel Roanoke. We had left home that morning upon what I thought was going to be a day of pleasure. But on reaching Roanoke I soon learned that I was to pass the day in a very different manner from what I had at first supposed. Once more I was left alone in my room at the hotel, but this time I ventured down into the parlor, for I was determined not to while away the moments as I had done in Greensboro. After spending an hour or so in trying to read, I returned to my apartments and began examining the different pieces of art placed within. From my surroundings, I imagined I was occupying the bridal chamber, and, on ringing for water, the bell boy informed me that my surmise was

correct. I then asked him whether Mr. Beard had ordered the above-named room.

He said, "Yes, ma'am! Your husband ordered the best one in the house; so we gave you this."

At first I could not conceive why John had ordered the bridal chamber. But after thinking a moment I said:

"Now I see through it all. He did so in order that he might censure me for being the sole cause of our trip costing a snug little sum."

Of course my husband never counted the dollars he himself spent foolishly. I was the one to blame on every occasion.

After remaining away about five hours, John entered our room at Hotel Roanoke in an intoxicated condition, and exclaimed:

"Well, Ida, I have just been to the office and settled our bill. What do you suppose it was?"

I said, "I haven't the slightest idea; but I imagine it was something near five dollars, as we have put on a great deal of style around here to-day."

John began cursing, and said:

"Yes; the bill was \$5, and if it had not been for your demanding the bridal chamber it would not have been more than \$2.50."

I asked him how in all the world he could accuse me of ordering the bridal chamber, when I knew nothing of our room until I was shown into it.

I said, "You also know that I insisted on our stopping at Catogni's restaurant instead of the hotel, but you said you would stop at Hotel Roanoke or break a trace. So, now, here we are, with \$5 gone out of your pocket—and poor little me—I am to blame for it all."

After I had ceased speaking, my husband picked

up our belongings, and caught me by the arm with a vise-like grip and said:

"Now, get ready and follow me immediately."

I did so, and, upon reaching the front piazza, he told me to be seated, and remain where I was until he again called for me. I then wanted to know of my husband where he intended going, and he said:

"I don't propose telling a mite like you my business—just wait and see."

With these remarks he mounted a bicycle and was soon lost to view. I became very nervous after his departure, as it was nearing the hour for our train to leave for Winston. I consulted my watch and found that it only lacked twenty minutes of the time. So I made up my mind to leave the hotel and start to the depot alone. About half way down the walk I beheld John coming toward me. He began cursing, and wanted to know why I didn't remain where I was until he called for me. I told him that I didn't propose being left in Roanoke by a mite like him. This increased his volley of oaths, and by the time we reached the train he was almost ready to explode, but refrained from doing so on account of the crowd around.

On our return home I promised myself never to accompany John again on what he termed a pleasure trip. However, he at last persuaded me to try him once more. So early one morning we left Winston for the quiet little city of Wilkesboro, N. C. John appeared to be in a very pleasant mood until we were within about four miles of our destination. Then he told me that he intended making it warmer than ever for me.

I said, "All right! I have come prepared this time for being left alone. So crack your whip and go ahead!"

I then produced a roll of music and several books. My husband tried very hard to snatch them from me, but I was a little too quick for him, and back into the satchel they went just as the conductor passed through the car and called out "Wilkesboro!"—our destination. So, of course, my escort had no time to wreak his vengeance upon me, but was compelled to put on another face, and to assist me from the train and up to the hotel. This time John did not even order me a room, but left me sitting in the public parlor, where I was found by the proprietor's daughter a few hours afterwards. Miss Sydnor kindly conducted me to her own apartments, and, after bathing my swollen face, I endeavored to make some excuse for being in the plight I was a few minutes before. Pretty soon after this my husband returned to the hotel, bringing with him the sweet(?) perfume of the whiskey bottle, which was such a shock to me that I lost one of my gloves and never recovered it again. I made sure that John would at least remain sober this one time, if he treated me cruelly otherwise. On entering the parlor, he said:

"Well, you remember I told you on our way here that I intended giving you h—ll to-day; so, here's for the first dose of it." With these remarks, he turned the accursed whiskey flask to his lips, causing me to tremble from crown to heel. I stood gazing at him for a moment, then snatched the bottle from his hand and tossed it out of the window, spilling the contents on the lawn below. Then he struck me across the head with his cane, and said:

"G—d d— you. I guess there's plenty more where that came from, and I am the one that can buy it, and will do so right away. So, now, I am off to the barroom. If you do not see me again before train time, you know the way to Winston!"

After my husband had left the hotel I tried to amuse myself by playing over several of the pieces I had placed in my satchel on leaving home that morning, but after awhile I said to myself, "Music hath no charms for me to-day." So I left the piano, and, on glancing around, noticed a novel lying on the settee, entitled "Tiger Lilly; or, the Woman Who came Between." I picked up the book and walked out on the front piazza. After seating myself in the hammock, I began reading and became very much interested in the story, as it reminded me somewhat of my own life. I read on and on, until I reached the 25th chapter, then my husband made his appearance, and authorized me to be ready within five minutes to accompany him to the depot, or he would break his cane, and also his whiskey flask, over my head. On our way home he told me that he was very sorry that he had treated me as he had that day. He then said: "Ida, let your precious little head rest here upon my shoulder, and tell me that you love me once again."

I looked at him for a moment, and said:

"John, love is a thing of the past with me, and I can never feel toward you as I have in days gone by. There was a time when I would willingly have laid down my own life to save yours, but your cruel treatment has at last driven me to the wall, and I now hate instead of love you, and I am determined that you and Jeff Grogan shall suffer yet for concealing the goods and money our creditors should have had. I knew there was something wrong the morning we opened up the china parlor, when you authorized Duncan to go down to the Hanes House and get the things you had stowed away in the garret and bring them in at the rear part of the store, as they were

packed in the old Cheap John boxes, and you didn't care to have everyone know it; and I was more than astonished when the boxes were opened and I beheld the ware I had thought in Mrs. Agee's possession long ago. Then, too, you remember, you only bought one bill of goods for the china parlor, as you had concealed enough of your old stock to fill the store. But still you say that you did nothing wrong and want to know whether or not I love you. I answer, No! No! The man on whom I bestow my affections must be an honorable one, and not the low-life villain you have proven yourself to be."

Then, all at once, Captain Holder announced Winston-Salem, and of course this ended our conversation.

In alighting from the train, John seemed perfection itself, and insisted that we take the summer car instead of walking down to the Hanes House.

He did this on account of there being quite a crowd gathered at the depot.

John always seemed anxious to appear perfectly devoted to me while in public, and the cruel treatment I received at his hands was in the privacy of my own room, either at home or in other places where I stopped.

After being seated in the car, John placed his arm around my shoulders and said:

"I would just like to know whether my little darling loves her old John boy or whether she really hates him."

I paid no attention to all his love making, but remained quiet, and by the time we reached our boarding house the fuse had at last come in contact with the powder, and the result was a grand explosion.

After clearing away the debris, I resolved within

my mind never again to accompany John upon one of his so-called pleasure trips.

Pretty soon after our return from Wilkesboro, John came to my room and informed me that he and Jeff Grogan were going to New York that evening upon what they termed a pleasure trip.

I said, "What, and leave me alone in charge of the business?"

My husband said, "Yes, why not? You are capable of managing it as well as I, and I intend going whether you are willing for me to or not."

He then left me, and I afterwards donned my hat and gloves for the purpose of visiting our place of business. On nearing it I noticed my husband and Grogan standing in the front door engaged in a close conversation. I knew in a minute that something was wrong, so walked around to the rear part of the store. Upon entering I heard John say:

"I just don't see how I can go and leave her in charge of things here the way they are at present."

I thought to myself, now I will see what they are up to, so I dropped down behind a stack of shoes and baskets.

As I did so Grogan said, "Well, John, do as you please about the matter; but if you will take my advice, now is the time for you to skip, as that wife of yours knows too much. And before you know it you will be wearing stripes around here. Do you see, old boy?"

John yawned, and said, "Oh! I don't think there will be any danger of it, and I suppose I will be compelled to leave off going with you this time."

Then Grogan turned around and exclaimed:

"Well, time's up, and I intend taking the trip whether you accompany me or not, so plank down the money; but wait, is the way clear?"

John said, "Oh, yes; there's no one here except you and I."

He then went to the safe and counted out \$70 in silver and laid them upon the counter. After doing this he again placed his hand into the safe and drew forth an old sock, taking therefrom \$5 in greenbacks.

After placing this along with the rest, he said:

"Well, Jeff, there she is, and good luck to you."

Grogan said, "All right, and now mum must be the word."

Then John remarked that there were more ways of killing a dog besides choking him to death on honey.

The conversation being ended, Grogan pocketed the money and was in the act of leaving the store when I arose from my hiding place and said:

"No, the way isn't clear; but I dare either one of you to say a word to me; if you do I will call an officer to you immediately."

They both looked as if a thunderbolt had struck them, and well they might, for I at last had them in my power, and they knew there was no way of escape.

CHAPTER V.

JOHN ENTERS THE MAGISTRATE BUSINESS.

Grogan left for New York that evening, while John remained at home in order to close out the business, and afterwards went in partnership with P. T. Lehman as justice of the peace. I did not approve of this new position—as I considered it very demoralizing and told my husband so. He didn't agree with me, but, on the other hand, thought his present occupation refining, and declared that he would do nothing else. So, day after day for six months or more he was seen sitting back with a bottle of bromo-seltzer by his side in that miserable old pigeon hole in the Buxton & Lemly block, engaged in doing what? Why, nothing, so far as providing for his family was concerned. I was compelled to look out for a cheaper dwelling place, and very often 9 o'clock at night found me standing in A. Savery's pawnshop, disposing of my jewelry and other trinkets given me when a child. I was forced to do this in order to obtain food and shelter for myself and children, and no one knew but what it was my husband who was supplying us with the necessities of life. During my girlhood I had heard of women being compelled to earn a livelihood in this way, but little did I think at the time that I, Ida May Crumpler, who was reared in luxury, would ever come to want, and be seen standing in a public pawnshop disposing of my wares in order to obtain food and lodging.

Just before leaving the Hanes House, John informed me that we owed the landlady \$12 for board.

I said, "Well, we haven't the money to pay her;

but perhaps she will accept something else instead, or at least you might ascertain whether she would or not."

He afterwards told me that Mrs. Hanes had as soon have our book case as the money.

I said, "Very well. She may have it, and I will find another place for our books immediately."

I did so, and those visiting the Hanes House to-day will have the opportunity of beholding the piece of furniture I prized so highly on account of its having a very sad history connected with it.

I felt somewhat relieved after this debt had been paid, or at least I thought so at the time, but have since learned that we were due Mrs. Hanes \$75 instead of \$12. Why John always took a delight in deceiving me I do not know, but I suppose in this instance he had disposed of the goods at the store and appropriated the money to some other cause instead of paying the landlady, and didn't care to have me know it.

I was loth to leave our apartments at the Hanes House, as they were very comfortable—having had them arranged to suit my own notion; but when I learned that we were unable to pay for them, I turned them over to the landlady without a murmur, and took up my abode in one room in the Montague Building, over the Western Union Telegraph office.

There, again, I passed the days in sadness, as my husband delighted in showing me the miserable life he was living. He refused to accompany me to church and the few minutes he remained at home were spent in reading Tom Paine's works, and declaring that if our children grew up to believe in the Bible, he would break their d— necks. This assertion made me shudder, when I thought of the two boys God had en-

trusted to our care; what was to become of them I did not know. But I thought that with such a faher their fate would be a sad one. Oh, infidelism! why art thou allowed in a civilized community? While living in the Montague Building my children and I were very often compelled to go without food for days at the time, unless I was able to dispose of some article in the way of jewelry or furniture. After doing this I would always recall to mind the widow who said glad was she when she could buy a shilling's worth of bread. The last piece of jewelry to go was my engagement ring. This I turned over and over in my hand, saying as I did so—

“Is it possible that I must part with the only remaining tie that binds me to the man I once loved, but now abhor?”

My ring bore the initials “J. L. B. to I. M. C.,” and on account of this I could not bear the idea of disposing of it as it was, so I pounded it into a solid mass of gold, selling the same to A. Savery for the small sum of \$2.50. This amount seemed almost a fortune to me that morning, as the ground was covered with snow, and two hungry children standing at my side crying for bread. After leaving the pawnshop, I purchased a load of wood, then food for the children's breakfast and the remaining portion of the money I paid to H. Montague for rent due him. As the coins fell upon his desk I said to myself, “There's the end of another fatal wedding.”

John had left home the evening before all this occurred on important business, so he said, and had not returned up to this time. I afterwards learned something in regard to the important business, and when I made bold to mention it to my husband, he cursed me, and said that he was tempted to break every bone in my body.

I said, "Yes, but you do not even dare to attempt such a thing, knowing as you do the secret I carry within my bosom, and were you to strike me one blow, the town should ring with your villainous work!"

My husband did not raise his hand toward me this time, but left the room, slamming the door in my face. He reopened it long enough to say that he wished I was dead and in h—. I told him I did not see why he wished me there, as it would also be his future stopping place.

At this period, Arthur Tuttle, the negro who shot and mortally wounded M. M. Vickers, one of our worthy policemen, was placed on trial for his life, and on the evening previous to this event, John came home earlier than usual, and authorized me to take our room key and open the door of L. M. Swink's office, for the purpose of obtaining his North Carolina Code, in order that Jeff Grogan, the negro's attorney, might enlighten himself in regard to points pertaining to the trial. My husband told me that if I refused to do as he said, he would kill me on the spot. So, with clasped hands, I fell at his feet and implored him to strike the blow that would end my wretched life, rather than force me to take that which did not belong to me. John struck me; then took our key and opened Swink's office door himself, taking therefrom the literature Grogan desired, and afterwards left the building. Where he went I do not know, but suppose it was either to his own or Grogan's office. At any rate, he did not return home until between 2 and 3 o'clock in the morning. In his hurry he forgot several of Mr. Swink's books, and on the following day when the young lawyer entered his office, he discovered that someone had been turning things

topsy-turvy within; so he made inquiry as to whether I knew of anyone entering his place of business. I told him all, and on my husband's return he cursed me for everything he could think of, and threatened to leave me in the bargain. I again told him to go!—and the sooner the better, as our lives had grown to be a burden to us both.

CHAPTER VI.

SOME INTERESTING FACTS CONCERNING THE RIOT OF 1895.

John was not only guilty of stealing the books, but for the small sum of \$25 he swore to a falsehood and selected the jurors in the Tuttle case, and also prompted Grogan during his speech. For this he was afterwards duly censured by the police force.

But the worst of all was yet to come, and I am sure the public will be more than surprised when I proclaim that John Lewis Beard—my husband—participated in the never-to-be-forgotten riot in 1895, when Charlotte, a neighboring city, came to our assistance, bringing with her the wonderful piece of mechanism familiarly known as the Gatlin gun. The mere sight of this weapon quelled the riot, causing peace and harmony to reign once more within our town. A few hours previous to the beginning of the riot my husband told me that I must not venture out upon the street, but remain indoors, as there would be an uprising of the colored population by 9 o'clock, and he was very much afraid that someone would be killed. I asked him the cause of all this disturbance.

He said, "Well, it is thought that Tuttle will be lynched to-night, and his friends are determined that these d—white rascals around here shall be foiled in their attempt."

After making these remarks he walked to the rear end of the hall and picked up a large claw hammer, saying as he did so that he was going to conceal himself in Lawyer Swink's closet, and in case an officer came for him I must say he was already on duty.

I said, "What!—tell a falsehood to shield you, after doing what you have?"

I had scarcely uttered the last syllable when I heard someone mounting our stairs, and I suppose John did, too, for as quick as lightning he was inside the closet, motioning me to turn the key. I did so, and then stepped back into the hall. On drawing aside the portiere, I beheld two officers of the law in quest of my husband. With the key in my hand, I stood gazing at them for a moment, then said:

"John isn't here, but at the Municipal Building in service. If you doubt my veracity in regard to the matter, you are at liberty to search our apartments."

I then threw wide the doors for them to enter. This they did not do, but returned to the street none the wiser as to John's whereabouts. And on the following day, when things had grown more quiet, my husband admitted to me that it was he who wrote the letter to the colored divine requesting him to disperse his congregation in order that they might surround the city prison for the purpose of protecting Tuttle, the prisoner within.

A few days previous to this occurrence I happened to come across an unsealed letter addressed to Colonel Boyd, of Greensboro. The contents of the missive were that he could employ my husband for the paltry sum of \$25 to select the jurors in the Tuttle case, as he had a great deal of influence over the countrymen, therefore was considered the very one to accomplish this work. I presented the letter to my husband, and asked who was the author of it. He told me that Jefferson Grogan, his attorney, was.

I said, "It does look as if Grogan is to forever be connected with your affairs, and he will be the cause of your ruin yet, unless you play quits with him, and

that soon. Surely, surely, you will do so, when you stop to think of how I lied—yes, lied—in order to protect you on the night of the riot. Then it was I had you in my power, and could have turned you over to the officers of the law without a moment's warning, but, instead, I sacrificed my own soul to save you. And now, for the sake of the past, I implore you to treat Grogan's pretended friendship with coolness, ere it's too late."

When the Tuttle trial was over, and the Judge had sentenced the negro to our State's Prison at manual labor for the term of 25 years, John remarked that money had at least saved the boy's neck, but that he and Grogan had worked hard to keep from view the black cap. My husband said at one time they made sure that they had lost their case on account of the d— little Vickers children, who sat sniveling in the court-room.

I said, "John, you must not forget that you have two boys in this city who may at some future day be trampled upon, and all on account of the doings of you, their father."

My husband then remarked that he did not care what became of his children, as he intended leaving Winston very soon—was only staying a few days for a purpose. For the time he remained after this he spent his nights away from home, telling me that he was trying to build up a good name by assisting those who were searching for the negroes who escaped from the prison during the riot. I have since learned that he was doing nothing of the kind, but was seen frequenting houses of ill-fame, and also lying around police headquarters, telling them there that I was a perfect shrew, and would not allow him to remain at home, therefore he was forced to seek lodging elsewhere.

Oh, the villain! Why does God let him go unpunished? With all my poverty I would not stand in his shoes to-day. He is now an outlaw, ostracized from his own community, and were his just dues meted out to him, he would be wearing stripes—not the red, white and blue—but gray and white alone, the emblem of our State Prison.

While occupying the pigeon-hole in the Buxton & Lemly block, John came near murdering me, by striking me over my neck and shoulders with a large piece of rope. I had barely entered his office when he began cursing, and told me to leave immediately.

I said: "Well, I have only come to ask for food, as the children and I are very hungry. We have had nothing to eat since yesterday morning, and I think it your duty to provide something for us."

He arose from his chair, and I thought was going in quest of food, but, instead, he caught me by the arm, and, with an oath, pushed me down the steps. In my descent I caught to a piece of timber that was protruding out from the wall. This somewhat broke my fall, and I was just gaining my equilibrium when John struck me with the rope, causing quite a crowd to gather around the door. It was sometime after this before I was able to walk down to my room in the Montague Building, and on the following day my neck and arm were all swollen, and bore the print of John's fingers and the piece of hemp.

A few days after this occurrence John met me on the street in front of D. D. Schouler's racket store and informed me that he had received a message from J. D. Dickens, of Bluefield, W. Va., stating that he would like very much to have him come on immediately to the above-named place, in order to close out a stock of goods he then had on hand. Without giving me time to reply, John said:

"I am going in the morning, whether you want me to or not."

I said: "Why, I am only too glad to know that you have at last secured a position that will pay better than your present one, and I will do all I possibly can in order to get you ready by to-morrow morning."

I then repaired to our apartments and began packing up my husband's clothing. While thus engaged, I had a presentment that he would never return. So, I penned a brief note, and placed it in one of his vest pockets. I implored him not to forget his little fool, as he always called me, but to remember that I had clung to him through adversity and prosperity, and would still do so if he would only try to do half-way right and change his mode of living. When the last article had been neatly folded and packed in the valise, for the sake of the past, I imprinted a kiss upon them. And a prayer went up to the Infinite Throne that John would yet reform and rear in the right path the two boys God had given us.

That evening on coming to supper my husband appeared to be very affectionate, and said that he hated to leave the children and I alone.

I said: "Well, of course we will miss you, but at the same time I am going to view the matter from a sensible standpoint, knowing, as I do, that unless you obtain employment at something we will be compelled to perish during the winter." After eating supper John visited his father and remained with him until 11 o'clock, and on returning to our apartments, he exclaimed:

"Well, Ida, I guess you will not be called upon to open the door for me again in a long while."

I said: "Why, you speak as though you never intended to return."

He looked at me a moment, then said :

"You bet old John will come back to his little girl—he could not live without her, and, to-morrow, when I leave, I want you to pin a boquet of flowers on my coat, so that I may feel as though my darling still retains a small portion of love for me."

He then kissed me, and said that I was dearer to him than any living creature upon earth.

Oh, the villain! the dark, dark villain! Why was it that God did not strike him dead upon the spot?

The following day was the holy Sabbath, and the one on which John was to take his departure from Winston to that miserable little mining town, Bluefield, W. Va.

After passing a sleepless night, I arose at 6 a. m.—just as I had done in the long, long ago, on my wedding morn. After preparing our morning repast, I gently called my husband, and told him that it was time to be getting up, so that he might not miss the 11 o'clock train. John did not breakfast at home, but went off to his father's residence for that purpose, and to receive a few more instructions, I suppose, or at least I judge so from what I afterwards learned. About twenty-five minutes to 11 John entered my room and said :

"Mamma, I guess it's time we were going down to the depot; so come kiss me before leaving here, and pin on my boquet?"

I did as he requested me, then we all left home for the station. On our way down to the station my husband handed me the key to his office and told me whatever I did, not to let old man Lehman get possession of it, but to hold it until further notice from him. Well, I would have died rather than to have given up the key to anyone, and John knew it. In

a few days after he had taken his departure from the city, his partner demanded of me the key I had in my possession, telling me he didn't think John ever intended coming back again. I positively refused to comply with Mr. Lehman's request, although he threatened me with an officer. I told him that I would give up the key the moment my husband authorized me to and not before. I also told the Justice of the Peace that he was perfectly at liberty to send the whole police force to my apartments if he so desired, and I would give them a warm reception, but the key would still be mine. I then betook myself to the Western Union Telegraph office for the purpose of wiring my husband as to what I should do in regard to giving up the key. The answer I received was—

“Why, certainly, turn the key over to Mr. Lehman at once.”

I did so, and this ended the key question.

Shortly after this, I received my first money order from John. The order called for \$5, which was very much appreciated, as we were nearly out of food and fuel. Accompanying the money was the most affectionate letter I ever read. My husband went on to say that he had never realized until then how dearly he loved me; that if he could only be with me once more, he would never leave me alone again at night, but would remain at home in order to make my life bright and happy.

Oh, God! I afterwards learned why it was that John had penned this missive, and he was also the author of two more likewise, all three being for the same motive.

Well, money and letters continued to arrive until the week before Christmas—then, all at once, both

ceased. I became uneasy about my husband, and wrote him several times, asking the cause of his long silence. Each time I failed to receive reply to my letters; so I wired him, but still no answer came. What to do I didn't know, as we were entirely without food. This was Monday evening, and we had tasted nothing since Sunday morning, and were beginning to feel very hungry. The children were crying, and I tried to comfort them by saying:

"Papa will surely send money to-morrow, and we will have a happy Christmas yet."

But alas! the morrow came, bringing with it no money; nor was there any tidings of our absent one, and I was about to give up in despair, when, all at once, some one rapped upon the door. On opening it, I beheld two gentlemen and a lady in quest of my madstone. I was overcome with joy, and requested the parties to be seated in the hall until I could make arrangements to apply the stone. I had never done the like before, but I went about the matter just as though I had, and am sure that my patient never discovered but what I had been accustomed to performing the feat all my life. I was not thinking of myself, but of my two hungry children, who had retired supperless. The lady's hands had been badly lacerated by the rabid dog, and it required seven stones to cover her wounds. I dipped the stones in lukewarm water, and then applied them, as I had seen my husband do. The stones adhered immediately, and remained sticking for forty-eight hours—the greatest length of time on record. The lady seemed very much pleased with my treatment, and requested that I give her lodgings for the remainder of the night. This I told her I could not do, as I only occupied one room and part of the hall, but would refer her to a com-

fortable boarding-house, which I did, and saw nothing more of my guests until morning. In my excitement I had forgotten that John always required the money in advance. So now I knew I would be compelled to wait until the stones dropped off. I was in hopes they would do so on the following day, as the children and I were growing very weak from want of food. Basil's lips had turned to an ashy paleness; in fact, he was too weak to even walk across the room, and still no tidings came from my truant husband. Once more what to do I didn't know. From my window I could see father passing too and fro along the street. I thought—oh, how near and yet so far!—as years ago I had promised him never to call upon him to aid me under any circumstances, and now, rather than do so at this late day, I would see my children perish!—yes, perish before my eyes.

On the following day, my patient made her appearance, but, to my great disappointment, the stones, instead of being off, were still sticking, and no signs of coming off soon. The parties appeared anxious to return home. So I insisted that if the stones were not off by morning, they do so, after paying me \$5 for applying the stones, and also give good security for the safe return of them when they finally came off. This was Tuesday, and Christmas eve, 1895, with not a cent of money in the house, and we had been without food for nearly three whole days. I was almost insane, so I wired my husband once more; but, as usual, no answer came. Of course, you understand that I sent the message "collect," and some one must have received them, or they would have been returned, as one was afterwards. On retiring that night, Basil's last words were:

"Mamma, do you reckon Old Santa Claus will come?"

I said: "Darling, I can not tell. You must wait and see."

As I uttered the last syllable, tears came to my eyes, for I knew that when morning dawned the little stockings would be as they then were, and my boys' hearts filled with sadness instead of mirth. I could not sleep, but sat thinking of John, and wondering why it was that he had forgotten his two babes and I at this happy Christmas tide. As the old town clock pealed out the hour of 2, I blew out my lights and sat down to think again, and could I have drawn aside the curtain in Bluefield, W. Va., at this moment, I would have known why we were treated thus. My husband's own aunt afterwards told me that it was at this hour he was carried to his room in an intoxicated condition, and remained so until late on the following day.

Christmas morning dawned clear and cold, and I had but little fuel and nothing for breakfast. So I sat wondering what to do. All at once a servant girl entered my room, bearing in her hand a nice cocoanut cake, sent me by my cousin, Mrs. H. A. Siddall. About this time my madstone patient entered the room also. She paid me \$5 and gave good security for the safe return of the stones, then took her departure for home.

Well, I was one happy mortal, having in my possession \$5, a cocoanut cake and two hungry children. I had not thought of the little stockings that were hanging limp until now, so I wrote a short, sweet letter to Basil, leaving the impression that it was from Santa Claus himself. The contents of the letter was: That as there were so many more children in Winston than he expected to find, he would be compelled to pay them a second visit on the following

night, and would bring something nice to those who had been asked to wait.

When the letter was finished, I enclosed a quarter, then dropped the whole into my boy's stocking.

The moment he awoke, his eyes wandered towards the fireplace, where hung the limp-looking little garment which had been placed there the evening before. His lips began to quiver, and I knew that in another minute there would be a scream. So I said:

"Now, don't cry, but look in your stocking; sometimes old Santa Claus leaves letters for children instead of toys."

The moment Basil placed his hand into the stocking he exclaimed:

"You were right, mamma! Old Santa has left a letter for me, and now I am going to see what he has to say."

I walked across the room to the window, so I might watch the expression upon my boy's face without his being aware of it. I noticed the color come and go; then he said:

"Well, I don't care. The quarter will do me more good than all the toys would have done."

He was pleased, and so was I. I then donned my hat and went out upon the street for the purpose of purchasing something substantial for our breakfast. On my return home, I had with me half a dozen eggs, a pound of sugar, one loaf of bread and a package of tea—the whole amounting to twenty cents. After making my purchases palatable, I placed all upon the table, and afterwards led the children, both blindfolded, to their seats. On opening their eyes, they each gave a loud scream. And well they might, for in the center of the table stood the cocoanut cake, looking as imposing as the grand old Pilot itself all

covered with snow. I had boiled the eggs and placed them around the foot of the mountain, as it were, making it appear all the more as though some one had been up early making snowballs on this beautiful Christmas morn.

Into Robah's plate I dropped fifty cents—his present, I told him, from mamma.

Breakfast being over, I cleared away the dishes, and immediately set about making others happy. First of all, I cut my cake in two and then placed it into a tiny box. After the lid had been securely fastened, I addressed it to John, notwithstanding he had forgotten me. The next thing I did was to purchase a few trinkets for my niece and nephew, Clifton and Louise Meroney. I had also remembered a little boy by the name of John P. Isom, whose home was at the Thomasville Orphanage. After packing the boxes, I addressed each one separately and carried them to the express office myself, paid the charges and returned to my apartments, feeling that I had spent at least part of the day in the right way. On reaching home, I found a nice dinner placed at my door. In the center of the tray was a note, stating that the viands had been sent me from Hotel Jones. I gave to the children what I thought sufficient for them, and the remaining portion I carried to a poor, motherless girl, who was ill. After spending an hour or so with her, trying to cheer her up a bit, I once more returned to my room, but only to think of John. Where was he, and what was he doing? I could not help repeating over and over. Oh, why has he forgotten me to-day? I said to myself, if I fail to hear from him by to-morrow's mail, I shall think him dead, and will make inquiry as to the cause of his death; but this I was spared, for on the morrow

while the children and I were at breakfast, we heard the ever-welcome footsteps of Mr. Jones, the postman. As he mounted the steps, my heart seemed to be in my mouth, and my hand trembled so on reaching for the letter that I came near dropping it, for I dreaded to break the seal of the long-looked-for missive, lest it contained news I didn't care to hear. As I read on and on, I learned that my husband had been ill—oh, so very ill, so he said—and that was the cause of his not sending us anything for Christmas. I was afterwards informed as to the nature of his disease.

After this, money orders and letters came more frequently, and on the 8th of January, 1896, I gave up my room over the telegraph office and moved into what was known as the Grubbs Building, on Liberty street. Here I had two rooms, instead of one, and, with Mr. Miller's aid, again was soon comfortably located.

On the 6th day of January, 1896, just a few days previous to moving into our new quarters, I paid my first visit to Forsyth court house, for the purpose of collecting twenty dollars due John for back costs while he was in the refining magistrate business.

If I should happen to live a hundred years, I will never forget my first visit to the temple of justice. On entering it, I felt as though I was going to be tried for my life, and it was some time before I found the Clerk's office. On reaching the door, I rapped gently, and some one said "Come!" I entered, trembling from head to foot, and asked for Mr. Wilson, Clerk of the Court. I was told that he was not in at present, and might not be for several hours. So I presented the order I had received from John to Mr. S. F. Vance, Mr. Wilson's assistant, and after signing my

name in the ledger several times, Mr. Vance paid me \$20.24. Three dollars of this money I paid to H. Montague, for rent due him, although John had written me not to do so. However, I disobeyed him for once, in order to pay my just debt. After doing this, I paid \$4 to James S. Dunn, in advance for the rooms I intended taking possession of in a few days; so, \$13.24 was the amount left me still, and I felt a little more independent. John had written me that he wasn't sure of my getting the money. However, I might try. I did, and you know the result.

Afterwards, Mr. Lehman told me that \$10 of the money I had received at the court house belonged to him, as he and Mr. Beard were partners. I then offered to pay the Justice of the Peace the amount due him, but he refused to accept it, saying that as long as I knew nothing in regard to the affair, he was willing to let the matter drop, and once more I learned of my husband's rascality.

Soon after this I received a letter from him stating that he expected to get a permanent job in Bluefield, and if so, he would send for the children and I about the 1st of March. Well, I heard nothing more about the matter for several weeks; during this time I became very ill. Robah wrote his father to that effect, but on receiving no reply to the letter he had written, he wired him. Presently an answer came, addressed to me. The contents were:

"Can't come; haven't the money.

J L B."

I thought very strange of this, especially when my husband was making a salary of \$75 per month. A few moments after he had received the message, some one rang the door bell. On answering it, Robah dis-

covered his grandfather, W. H. Beard, standing before him. Mr. Beard wanted to know of Robah whether he had wired his father to return home on account of my extreme illness. Before giving the matter a second thought, Robah replied in the affirmative. I then thought to myself, now, John's father has wired him not to come, and sure enough, my surmise was correct, as I afterwards had proof of it placed before me.

CHAPTER VII.

MY LIFE IN BLUEFIELD, W. VA.

Not long after this, I received another letter from John, saying that he had at last secured a permanent position, and would send for us at an early date, as he was almost crazy to see me.

I wrote my husband that while I was loth to leave Winston, N. C., my own, my native State, I would do so if he thought he could better himself elsewhere, and would promise me to lead a different life in the future from what he had in the past. After finishing my letter, I went out for the purpose of mailing it, then back to my room to await a reply. I hadn't long to wait, for in a day or two afterwards T. J. Pratt, the postman, handed me a letter from my husband, which ran as follows:

BLUEFIELD, W. VA., Feb. 10, 1896.

My Own Little Darling Wife:

Your precious letter received, and it filled my heart with gladness to know that you were willing to leave Winston in order to be with your old John once more.

Yes, pet, I will make the promise you have asked, and by the help of God will lead a different life from this time forth, living for my little Ida, and her only. Now trust your husband once again and make arrangements to come to him as early as possible.

(He then added that I would never know how dearly he loved me, and that he fairly worshipped the ground I walked upon, and would also die for me if need be. Finally, he said that he guessed I was beginning to tire of all this love making, so he would cease, and write something in regard to my leaving Winston. He began by telling me, whatever I did, not to let anyone—not even my father—know of my intentions; if

I did, his creditors would seize our furniture for his debts.) John said—

I am sure that skunk Frank Martin would if he knew you were going to leave; so be very careful as to what you say and do. See old man Savery and find out what he will allow you for your furniture. Do not make too much of a sacrifice of it, but do the best you can, and spend just as little as possible in getting ready to come, as we shall need all the money we can scrape in order to begin house-keeping here. I hope my little girl will like Bluefield; at any rate, she will be with her old John. And now, goodnight! Kiss the boys for me—I mean our boys.

I retire to dream of you.

As ever, your loving husband,

JOHN LEWIS BEARD.

P. S.—On starting do not attempt to wire me from Winston, but wait until you reach Roanoke. Should you wire me before leaving home those d—s there might hold your trunks; but once your feet are upon the soil of another State, what can they do? Why, nothing. So take old John's advice—do just as he says, and you will come out O. K.

J. L. B

After I had finished reading my letter, I said:

“Oh, how can I dispose of the furniture father gave me? But, I suppose, if I am going to leave the State, John's creditors would hold everything for his debts, so I might as well try to get something out of what I have as to lose it all.”

Immediately after making up my mind to dispose of the furniture, I walked around to A. Savery's pawn shop, in order to ascertain what he would be willing to allow me for it.

He said: “Oh, I hardly know; I never like to buy a cat in a sack, so Mrs. S—— and I will call at your rooms this evening and take a look at the furniture, then I can tell more about the amount I would be willing to give for it. I then told him all right, and he invited me to walk back and see his wife, who was in the rear part of the building preparing their noonday meal. To Mrs. Savery I read a portion of

the letter I had received from my husband—the part where he requested me to see them in regard to the furniture, and to say nothing to anyone except she and her husband about my getting ready to leave the city. I remained with Mrs. S—— for an hour or two, then returned home to ponder whether or not I should sacrifice the things father had given me and go to my husband, or whether to remain in Winston. I finally decided as I thought a true wife should, and the following Thursday, February 16, 1896, I took my departure from Winston, N. C., to Bluefield, W. Va. Oh, that never-to-be-forgotten trip to Bluefield!

On the morning I was to leave Winston, I arose at half past 5, and after getting the children and myself ready, ate a few mouthfuls of breakfast, then called at my father's residence in order to say goodbye to Sister Nell, and also to bid a last adieu to the home of my girlhood, thinking I would never return.

I paid no attention whatever to my trunks, as Mr. Savery had kindly offered to have them checked for me. So I remained with sister until within twenty minutes of train time. Then, in company with the children and an old colored woman by the name of Miranda Ratcliffe, who had nursed me from infancy, I left home for the station.

Upon reaching the depot, I beheld Mr. Savery coming down the track, bearing a neat looking package in his hand. I afterwards discovered it to be a nice lunch, prepared by Mrs. Savery for the children and I. On taking the package, I handed Mr. Savery the key to my apartments and told him the furniture, for which he had paid me \$100, was within, and that he could take possession of it as soon as I was gone.

I then entered the car, and was getting comfortably seated, when Mr. S. handed me my tickets and checks,

and after wishing me well, he left the train. And in a few minutes I heard the familiar sounding ding-dong, ding-dong of the bell on the engine, and knew that very soon Winston, my old home, would be left behind.

My brain was filled with thoughts of oh! where was I going, and how would I find John; would he be a kind and loving husband, or the same cruel wretch he was on leaving home?

Soon after leaving Winston, it began raining; splash, splash, came the large drops against the windows of the car, causing nought but gloom within. So I began to while away the time by recalling to mind a dream I had just a day or two previous to my departure.

I dreamed that I was in Bluefield, and while there died, and with the case in which the casket was to be placed returned to Winston, my old home, for burial, and had reached my father's residence, and was standing by the rose bush in the yard superintending the digging of my grave. When presently I beheld Mr. F. H. Vogler coming up the walk. I handed him the case and said: "Well, I suppose you heard of my death while in that miserable hole; I could not bear the idea of being buried there, so have returned home for the purpose, and intend purchasing the casket of you. Why I brought the case, I do not know."

Mr. Vogler said, "Yes, we heard of your death, and wondered whether John would bring your remains back for interment.

I said, "Hush, speak not of John; he, too, is dead."

The undertaker also told me that my grave was in readiness, and a beautiful one it was, smooth and all lined with white chrysanthemums. After this he vanished, leaving me standing by the aperture, into which I dropped a bundle of letters, the missives written me by John in the long, long ago.

I was very much impressed with my dream, and paid no attention to anything else, until I at last realized that we had reached Roanoke, and heard Captain Stanfield say:

"Mrs. Beard, your train for Bluefield is on time, and if you will allow me, I will assist you across."

I thanked him, then picked up my belongings and was soon seated in the other car. The conductor raised his hat and passed out.

Then it was I thought of the message I was to have sent John, informing him that the children and I were on our way, but the train for Bluefield was now moving off at a rapid rate, giving me no time for anything. So I made up my mind that on reaching our destination, I would ask an officer to direct me to my husband, or at least to his boarding house, having in my possession the name and number of the place.

The scenery along the road from Roanoke to Bluefield was perfectly grand. At the different stations the queerest kind of human beings boarded the train. From their gestures and mode of articulating, I learned that they were Hungarians, on their way to Bluefield, Pocahontas and Keystone, for the purpose of working in the coal mines.

The females were dark complexioned little creatures, who were attired in short skirts made of some coarse material, low-quartered shoes and red bandana handkerchiefs fastened tightly around their heads.

The males were rough looking people, and came near frightening me out of my senses every time they spoke.

I did not take to my companions very readily, but with the children remained in the rear part of the car.

On arriving at East Radford, a lady and her son

came on the train. They were of my own nationality, therefore making me feel a little more comfortable. I afterwards learned that the lady was from Lynchburg, Va., and was then on her way to visit her husband, who was employed as a machinist in the city to which I was going.

My friend and I conversed with each other until within about five miles of Bluefield, then I called the conductor to me and told him who I was, and also asked him whether he would aid me in finding an officer on reaching our destination. This he promised to do, and by the time the train had stopped, I noticed a blue coat standing on the platform. Presently he stepped up to me, raised his cap, and said that he had been asked to see me safely to my husband, but would not be able to do so just at that moment, as he would be compelled to take charge of a prisoner who was on the train. The officer then told me to wait for him in the reception room, and he would call by for me in fifteen or twenty minutes.

Well, I didn't know whether he would or not, as I had about lost confidence in all mankind. So I stepped up to the ticket agent, introduced myself, and told him that I was alone with the exception of the children, and must find my husband before morning, if possible.

The agent didn't seem to know of anyone by the name of Beard, and as it was raining very hard, and my train being the last one through for the night, there were no conveyances at the depot, and he supposed I would be compelled to remain where I was until morning.

The children began to cry, and I am not ashamed to say that for the moment I did, too, but soon checked myself, and told the children to keep quiet, as we

would be cared for by the depot agent, and that on the morrow we would find papa.

I was beginning to make things comfortable, when I heard some one addressing the agent. On looking around, I beheld a smooth-faced young man standing before me. He asked me whether I was the lady from Winston, N. C., who was in search of her husband. I told him I was. He then introduced himself, and said he hoped I would pardon his seeming boldness, as he was almost certain he knew John from the description I had given of him, and if I did not mind venturing out into the storm, he would take me to him. I told him that I was only too glad to accept of his offer, and would be ready to accompany him in a minute. And such a gathering of satchels you never saw.

Just before leaving the station, the young man said :

"I am sure that I am acquainted with your husband, if he is that bald-headed fellow who clerks for J. D. Dickens, but he doesn't go by the name of Beard, neither has he represented himself as being a married man since landing in the city."

For the moment I hardly knew what to do, whether to leave the depot or not, as I didn't care to be wading around in rain and mud shoe-top deep in order to meet some other woman's husband. The young man noticed that I was hesitating about something, so said :

"Madam, perhaps you would prefer walking up to the Bluefield Inn, and wait there until morning to find Mr. Beard."

I said, "No, I had rather not. Then told him if he would accompany me to L. D. Kingsbury's boarding house I would pay him one dollar for doing so."

He said, "Well, I know where the Kingsbury House

is, but it's over at the pool, and I don't think you want to go there."

I, not thinking what he had reference to, said:

"Yes, that's the place where my husband boards, and I must find it to-night."

On seeing that I was bent on going, the young man started on ahead of the children and I. We walked on for about three squares, then he stopped in front of a miserable looking place, saying as he did so:

"Well, here we are; this is the Kingsbury House, but I hardly think you will care to enter."

The moment he ceased speaking, I clasped both the children by the hand and exclaimed, "Oh, Heavens, where are we and what shall we do? for I had caught a glimpse of about seventy-five men and women who were playing pool in the lower part of the building.

I had never been an eye witness to a scene like this before, and I hope I may never be again. I compared the picture to that of purgatory more than anything else. And to think that there I was standing in the mud and water up to my shoe tops in front of a gambling den at 11 o'clock in the night almost turned my hair gray.

It took me but a moment to decide what to do, so I mounted the rickety old steps and rapped upon the door. While waiting to be admitted, I drew forth my purse and handed the young man the dollar I had promised him for his trouble. He refused to accept the money, and said he was only too glad to have been of service to me, especially on a night like this. He then wanted to know whether I wanted him to wait until the door was opened.

I said, "If you please, as I am not sure of remaining here for the night; am only anxious to ascertain

something of my husband's whereabouts before leaving."

I failed to catch the name of my protector, when receiving an introduction to him at the station, therefore will not be able to refer to him in any way, except as a friend, but such he was, or he would not have shown me the kindness he did on that stormy night in Bluefield, W. Va. I know his mother was a lady and had raised her son to be a gentleman.

I was compelled to rap twice upon the door of the den, as I termed it, before getting admittance. Then, all at once, the door flew open, and before me stood a dark haired girl; in her hand she held a lamp, and reminded me of Madge, in "Royce, the Gypsy." For the moment I imagined that I was addressing the Gypsy Queen herself, but soon returned to the reality, and said:

"This is Miss Kingsbury, I suppose, and I am your cousin, Mrs. John Beard, from Winston, N. C. Is my husband in?"

The girl remained standing in the doorway, looking at me in a bewildered way, neither inviting me in nor out. I didn't know what to do, and was in the act of turning around for the purpose of going back to the Bluefield Inn, when an older lady appeared upon the scene, and asked who it was that sought shelter for the night. Then it was that the Gypsy Queen spoke for the first time, saying:

"Why, mother, John's wife and children have come!"

At the word "wife" about fifty different heads appeared at the windows, and I made sure that I would be murdered on the spot. I was sufficiently amused with my trip already, and would much rather have been at home than where I was.

Mrs. Kingsbury, in her strange way, invited me to enter. Before doing so, I turned to my protector and once more thanked him for his kindness. He bade me goodnight, and I never beheld his face again.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN WHICH MY EYES ARE OPENED.

On entering the Kingsbury House, my aunt, by marriage, said :

“Well, Ida, we were expecting you this week, but not to-night. However, we will do the best we can for you.”

I thanked her, then asked to be shown to my husband. I was told that he did not room there, but at the store, and that he only boarded with his aunt. So I had caught John in a falsehood immediately upon my arrival. He had written me not to be uneasy about him, as he roomed and boarded with his uncle’s family, and that they would take good care of him in case of sickness.

On seeing that I was very anxious to meet my husband, his aunt sent to the store for him, and could I have known at that moment where he was preparing to go, I would never have looked upon his face again.

On entering the room at his uncle’s residence he said :

“Well, Ida, I see you have arrived O. K., and did you bring with you the money you received for the furniture?”

The moment I saw my husband, I noticed that there was something wrong, so I said :

“No. I left it all at home in the bank. I knew I could send for it when needed.”

Instead of clasping me in his arms, he began cursing, and said :

“Well, it’s needed now, and you must return to

Winston in the morning in order to get the money, or I will break your d— neck.”

I looked at John and thought: such a reception, after being separated for fourteen long weeks—or at least they seemed long to me. John continued to abuse me after we had repaired to our apartment for the night, and one of the boarders in an adjoining room told him that if he didn't stop cursing me, he would be compelled to appear before the Mayor on the following day. During all this time I had never removed my hat, but sat with it on—merely pushing back the veil I had worn, and never once thought of retiring. John finally cursed himself to sleep, and by the time he did so it was growing very cold in the room, as the fire in the stove had died out, and there was nothing with which to replenish it; so I drew my wraps closely about me, and by the dim light of the lamp sat watching my husband's distorted face. I thought: Poor fellow, he is now past redemption, and what will my life be here in Bluefield, my future home? While thinking thus, I knelt at John's bedside, and once more asked God to turn his footsteps into the right path ere it was too late. When I arose from my knees, I imprinted a kiss upon John's forehead, saying to myself, I guess this will be the last. About 4 a. m. my husband awoke with an oath, and exclaimed:

“I can't sleep for thinking about an engagement I had last night, and your coming without writing me interfered with my arrangements, and now I will catch the very d— this morning, and I know it, on account of failing to keep my appointment.”

I said, “Well, John, it must have been a very important one.”

He told me that it was, as he had promised to call upon a lady friend of his.

He said, "She isn't much, but I love her just the same. And now that you know the secret, how do you like it?"

I said, "Oh, well, I am not at all surprised," and at the same time began to cry. Then John pointed at a basin of water, and said:

"Go bathe your face immediately, and stop that foolishness. I don't care to take you down to breakfast with your eyes looking as red as an old fox."

I almost dreaded for the breakfast hour to arrive, not knowing where John would take me. Into the pool room, I was afraid. So I pretended not to hear him when he authorized me to bathe my face. This caused him to send forth another volley of oaths, and our lodger in the adjoining room exclaimed:

"Well, Bird, I hear you cursing that poor woman again. I am anxious to see her. They say that she is your legal wife, notwithstanding you have been telling everyone that it was your sister who was coming to visit you."

On going down to the dining room that morning, I beheld about thirty-five miners and machinists seated at the table, and had it not been for the viands placed before them, I would have made sure that I was in the pool room. Before taking our seats, my husband said:

"Gentlemen, allow me to introduce you, one and all, to my sister, or Miss Bird, I should have said!"

I looked at John, then bowed to the dark complexioned people around me.

Well, I was Miss Bird to the strangers, and they gazed upon me as though I had been a being who had just landed from another world.

Breakfast being over, I repaired to the family sitting room and saw nothing more of John until about an

hour afterwards. Then he returned, placed his arm around my waist, and said:

“Old John’s more than sorry he treated his little girl as he did last night, and will never be guilty of doing so again. And now, if you will give me your checks, I will have the trunks sent up immediately, and we will remain here with Uncle Lawrence until ready for housekeeping.”

While awaiting the arrival of my trunks, I received a note from Doctor and Mrs. H. C. Jones, residents of the city. They informed me that they had two rooms to let, and as we were from North Carolina, their former home, would be glad to have us take up our abode with them at once. I was very glad of the prospect of making a change; so called to see Mrs. Jones in regard to the matter. The moment I beheld the rooms, I was delighted with them, and told my friend that we would take possession of them in a few days.

Mrs. Jones said: “Well, Mrs. Bird, it wasn’t that I was anxious to rent my rooms, but hated to see you living over there in that miserable place. You remind me of a beautiful flower blown from someone’s garden in the wilderness. And the moment I heard you were a Baptist, I told the doctor I must have you with me, and I hoped you would like Bluefield, and remain some time, although I haven’t the least doubt but what you are sufficiently amused with the filthy little city already.” I told her I was, and would be willing to return to Winston at any minute.

She then said: “Well, I hope that your coming will be of great benefit to your husband, and if you can prevail on him leaving his present boarding house, I think it will.”

One word brought on another, and, finally, Mrs.

Jones told me something of John's mode of living since landing in their midst. She said for about two weeks after his arrival in the city he seemed to be a perfect gentleman, and she looked upon him as such. He represented himself as being an unmarried man, and a strict member of the Baptist church, although he felt at times as though he had grown cold or was a backslider, and while a revival was in progress there, he had asked the prayers of the Christian people, and also declared that he would like to be reconsecrated for the purpose of leading a better life.

Once more I declare him the darkest villain upon earth.

He did this in order to gain the confidence of the people, and afterwards began his treacherous work.

Mrs. Jones attributed John's downfall to his associations over at the pool rooms.

I said: "No, I guess not altogether, as he was quite a wild bird before leaving home, therefore was easily led astray. And I had hoped that on coming here he would reform, and that I would find a different man from what I did."

After leaving my friend, I returned to the Kingsbury House, where I found John waiting for me. He seemed very anxious to have me accompany him down street. We entered the postoffice, and there I was again introduced as Miss Bird, his sister. I bowed as I had done that morning at the breakfast table, but afterwards asked my husband why he did not introduce me as his wife, and why he had assumed the name of Bird, instead of Beard.

He said, "Oh! the boys here just call me Bird for mischief, and to be even with them I am going to let them think that you are my sister at first."

I looked upon the affair as a joke, but soon learned

that others looked upon it in a different light, and really thought me John's sister. And on the evening following my arrival in Bluefield, I received a note from one of the young gentlemen whom I had met in the postoffice. He requested that I accompany him to a masquerade ball given in honor of the visiting young ladies in the city.

I was perfectly shocked at the thought of such a thing, and treated the young gentleman's note with silent contempt. You can imagine my surprise when, on going down to supper, I beheld, sitting opposite my place at the table the author of the note I had received a few hours previous.

He bowed politely, and asked whether I had received the note he had written me, and if so, why I failed to answer it. I looked at him and said:

"Sir, excuse me; did you address me as Miss or Mrs. Bird?"

He said, "Why, Miss Bird, of course. Are you not Mr. Bird's sister?"

Again I looked at the stranger before me, and with a trembling voice exclaimed:

"No, not his sister, but his legal wife, and the babes at my side are his legitimate children! If you doubt my veracity in regard to the matter, I refer you to Rev. H. A. Brown, A. H. Eller, and Messrs. Buxton & Watson, of Winston, N. C. I am a member of the Baptist church, and much rather you had asked me to sever an artery in my throat than to have requested me to attend a dance. I never was in a ball room in my life."

The young man arose from the table without eating a mouthful, and offered me his hand, saying:

"Madam, I beg your pardon a thousand times. You are a lady, and I appreciate your sentiments in regard

to the ball room; once more I ask your pardon for the mistake I have made."

On leaving the dining room, the young man motioned to my husband to follow him, and upon reaching the hallway I heard them conversing in tones not pleasing to the ear. And when John returned once more to the table he wore an expression on his face that no one cared to see.

Well he might, for had he not been foiled in his villainous scheme?

He supposed that I, in order to avenge my wrong, would accompany his friend to the dance. Then he would proclaim to the world that I had proven myself untrue to him, and upon these grounds obtain a divorce.

And now that he had been foiled, knew not what to do.

I do not bear the least particle of malice toward the young gentleman who asked me to be his companion for the evening, for I really think his intentions were good, and thinking me the sister of his friend, intended giving me a pleasant time during my stay in the city.

That same evening, before retiring, two little girls called at the Kingsbury House and asked for Mr. Bird's brothers.

I said, "You are mistaken, he hasn't a brother in the place."

And before I could say more, the girls both screamed out:

"Yes, ma'am, he has; we mean those little boys who came here with their sister last night from Winston, N. C."

I had not fully realized until then that John had represented the whole family as being brothers and

sisters. So I at once told the children that I was Mr. Bird's wife, and the little boys whom they had called to see were his sons.

The children did not tarry a moment, but down the street they flew, and on to the store. Basil happened to be with his father when the girls entered, and heard one of them say:

"Oh, Mr. Bird! that lady over at the Kingsbury House says that she is your wife, and the little boys your sons. Is it so?"

John then told them that I was trying to fool them, and that the story they had heard at first was true.

I afterwards learned that my husband had engaged himself to three different young ladies of the place, who were perfectly shocked on hearing that he was already a married man.

After moving to Dr. Jones's residence, John began his cruel treatment in full. It was seldom he spent his nights at home with his family, but was seen frequenting the pool rooms and other places too vile to mention.

One morning about 3 o'clock he entered my room and began cursing me at such a rate that the Doctor said he was really afraid the plastering would fall from his walls.

I mentioned this to John, but it only made matters worse. He then began using his boot heel upon my body, and several scars I brought with me on my return to Winston.

On Tuesday following my arrival in Bluefield, there was a reception given for the benefit of the Y. M. C. A., and my husband insisted that I accompany him. At first I said I did not care to do so, but finally decided to go rather than be contrary.

Upon reaching the door of the reception room,

John told the children and I to wait a few minutes on the outside. He entered and closed the door after him.

I waited a reasonable length of time for my husband to make his appearance, but on account of his failing to do so, I, too, asked to be admitted to the rooms.

The young gentleman at the door, who was acting as usher, told me I could pass by paying fifty cents admission fee.

I then said, "Well, my husband will pay the amount required."

In the meantime I was looking over the crowd in order to ascertain whether he was within, as I didn't quite understand his way of doing. I could not imagine why he had left me standing on the outside, after being so anxious to have me accompany him.

Presently I noticed John sitting up near the front; he seemed to be engaged in a close conversation with a red-haired, freckle-faced woman. I was in the act of asking the usher to call him to the door, when, all at once, Basil said:

"Papa, come out here and pay our way in, and be quick about it, please; we are getting cold out here in this place."

Then the usher said, "What, that bald-headed fellow your father? Surely not; he has been here about fourteen weeks, and this is the first time I ever knew that he was a married man."

Before he had ceased speaking, John was at my side, saying:

"Come in here, and stop disgracing me."

He did not try to find a seat for me, but left me standing in the middle of the hall near a young gentleman, who arose from his chair and presented it to

me, while my husband returned to the red-haired woman.

For some reason, Basil had failed to enter the room with Robah and myself. Presently I heard the usher say :

"Bird, there's a boy at the door who says he is your son, and I would like very much for you to come and take charge of him." Once more John arose from his seat, came down the aisle like wildfire. This time the red-haired woman accompanied him, and before reaching the door, he said :

"I guess you are mistaken about his being my son ; he is my little brother."

Then the young man at the door exclaimed :

"Well, he is one or the other, and enough like you to be your double."

After paying Basil's admission fee, John and his companion returned to the front, taking no more notice of me than if I had been a thousand miles away.

I was compelled to sit there among strangers for two hours or more ; and was also an eye witness to the heart-rending scene before me. Once during the time I motioned for my husband to come to me. He started, and as he did so, the woman sitting by him placed her hand on the inside of his shirt collar and exclaimed :

"No, you will not leave me and go to her ; if you do, I will be even with you yet."

John whispered something in her ear, and afterwards came to where I was, and wanted to know how I was enjoying myself. I said very much indeed. I then asked him whether he thought he was treating me right, and who the red-haired woman was.

He said, "Oh, so far as my treatment is concerned, if you are not pleased with my way of doing you can

return home at any moment. And as for the woman, I don't know who she is; I never met her until to-night, and it does seem as though I can't get rid of her on easy terms."

I wonder now that I didn't kill them both on the spot. After John had returned to his companion of a few moments before, the strangers around me began whispering one to another.

I heard them say—

"I feel sorry for her. He has been telling everyone that she was his sister, but the general rumor is that she is his wife."

When the reception was over, and we were in the act of leaving the hall, I heard the Baptist minister's daughter say—

"I believe that I will introduce myself to her, in order to ascertain whether she is Miss or Mrs. Bird!"

I suppose that John heard the young lady's remark, for he caught me by the arm and said:

"Come! It's time we were going!"

About half way down the steps he began cursing me, and continued doing so until we were in sight of home; then he left me standing in the middle of the street, saying:

"Now, go ahead, and I will come when I get ready."

After leaving me, I saw no more of him until 4 o'clock next morning. I suppose he returned to the hall to accompany the red-haired woman to her apartments.

A few evenings after the reception, John came home early and informed me that he had a fair prospect of returning to our old home, as there was a gentleman stopping down at the Bluefield Inn who contemplated opening up a Cheap John store in Winston, and had spoken something about employing him to

do the auctioneering. My husband then authorized me to place before him his Sunday wearing apparel, as he was going to the hotel in order to make arrangements in regard to salary, etc. I was delighted with the prospect of returning to Winston once more, therefore did everything my husband asked me to do, in fact, brushed his hat just as he was leaving the room for the hotel, as I thought. I remained up, waiting for him to return, until 12 o'clock, then retired, hardly knowing what to think, but would have known had I met Jailer Kingsbury and Chief of Police Watkins with their prisoner. For further information as to where my husband was found, I refer you to the above named parties. It's sufficient for me to say that I heard nothing more in regard to the auction house that was to have been opened up in Winston.

CHAPTER IX.

THE LIGHTS TURNED ON.

On Saturday following this affair, I called at J. D. Dickens' store and inquired for my husband. I was told that he wasn't in, nor wouldn't be soon, as he had been discharged. Of course I was anxious to learn the cause, and learned from the proprietor that about three weeks previous to my arrival in the city John had let a certain woman there have \$300 worth of furniture on time, and he, himself, had stood good for the things until paid for, and in the meantime had allowed the woman to dispose of the furniture and leave the city. Dickens was the loser, and the result was that John was dismissed from the store.

I also learned from Mr. Dickens that quite a number of articles, such as costly dress patterns, shoes, wraps, etc., had been purchased from him by John. The things were supposed to have been sent to the children and I, but for some reason we failed to receive them. And when I questioned John about the matter, he cursed as usual, and said that it was all a d— lie.

I said, "Well, I noticed that the things were charged to you on the books, at any rate; as to whether they left the store, I do not know."

I also asked my husband what had become of the money he had earned since his arrival in Bluefield. He at first told me it was none of my d— business, that I would never know; but finally said that he had sent \$25 of his earnings home to pay debts of honor. He then gave me the names of the parties to whom he had sent the money, and on my return to Winston

I called upon them in order to ascertain whether or not they received the amount due them. Neither party had done so; and, furthermore, told me that John did not owe them a cent. So, I supposed the \$25 never reached Winston, N. C., but remained to do service in Bluefield, W. Va.

Before leaving Mr. Dickens' store that morning, he told me that he had not intended employing my husband any longer than March 1, and was more than surprised at him for sending for his family, and had he known anything in regard to the matter, he would have written me not to come.

I now see why John was anxious for me to dispose of my furniture and come to him at once. He either wanted the money I had received, in order that he might make the first payment on the furniture he had stood good for, or else intended pocketing all he could lay his hands upon, and then skipping the place, leaving me penniless and alone among strangers. But, as it happened, I had returned home before being left without money or a pillow to lay my throbbing head upon.

After lying around Bluefield for a week or two without work, John entered my room one evening and seemed in a very good humor. He came up to where I was sitting, placed his hand upon my shoulder, and said:

"Ida, I have a proposition to make, and I hope that you will approve of it. If you will send a telegraph money order back home for enough money for me to go on to Columbus, Ohio, I think I can get a permanent job there, and we will make the place our future home, and I also will give you my word as a gentleman that I will reform and lead a different life from this time forth."

I said: "No, John. Your promises are like pie crust—easily broken; therefore, the few dollars I have at home in bank must remain where they are. However, I will send to Winston for enough money to take us back there, and, on reaching the place, will sweep the streets, if need be, if you will live an honest, upright life. I know that you can be a man once more if you will only try!"

John looked at me as though he would like to crush me, then cursed me and left the room. On going out I heard him say—

"Foiled again! It does look like nothing will work!" I laughed to myself and said: "Ah, ha! A burnt child never fools with the fire the second time, and I will now take warning and hold on to what little money I have, for I see that the money is all he is after."

I at that time had \$55 on my person, but did not dare to let John know of it. I believe he would have killed me in order to have secured the money. When my husband saw that he wasn't going to get hold of the money as easily as he had expected, he agreed to return to Winston, and requested me to send for the money at once, and that evening on leaving home he said:

"Oh, yes! Ida, I'll attend to that money matter and save you the trouble."

I said, "It isn't any trouble, and I had rather attend to it myself. It's true I never sent a telegraph money order in my life, but am not ashamed to ask advice from those who have."

So it was arranged that we were to return home in a day or two.

On Saturday night before leaving Bluefield, John pretended to be talking in his sleep, and said that he

was going to get married the 1st of March. He also said that he wanted a coffin, and wondered where he could get one on the sly.

Sunday morning he insisted that I accompany him for the purpose of taking a walk over on the mountain. He told me that he had promised a young doctor, who was a friend of his, to meet him there.

I thought of the sleeping conversation on the previous night and remained at home, thus depriving the coffin that was in readiness for its burden.

I believe that John had intended murdering me while out walking, and then concealing my body somewhere on the mountain. But as it happened he escaped a free ride to the gallows this time by my failing to comply with his request.

On Monday morning I began making preparations for our return to Winston. While engaged in packing my trunks, Basil entered the room and exclaimed:

"Oh, mamma! have you heard the latest news? A little boy bearing the name of Bennie Eckles was killed a few minutes ago by the train. You ought to have seen him.

My first thoughts were of the mother, and I made up my mind that I would be with her in less than ten minutes time if possible.

I left off packing the trunks, donned a hat that was lying close by and was soon on my way to the home of the injured boy. I had gone only about three blocks when I met an officer, to whom I said:

"Good morning!" And asked him to direct me to the Widow Eckles' cottage. The officer told me he would do so with pleasure, and as we walked along he wanted to know whether I wasn't the little lady who had arrived in the city a few weeks before in search of her husband. I told him I was. He then

seemed anxious to learn why I had failed to wait for his return that night at the station. For the moment I hardly knew what to say, as I didn't care to have the officer know that I doubted his returning; so I said:

"Well, not knowing but what you would be detained longer with your prisoner than you at first expected, I became uneasy, therefore went in quest of my husband in company with another young gentleman; however, allow me to thank you for your trouble."

By this time we were within sight of the widow's cottage. So I told my guide that I would need his services no longer. I again thanked him, and he disappeared, leaving me to continue my way alone.

But in a few minutes I was sorry I had dismissed the officer, for on reaching the West End bridge I discovered it to be all covered with snow, and I almost feared to cross lest I plunge to the dark waters below; while thinking I crossed over to the further side in safety, and as I did so, thought of Lucy Gray as she climbed the hills that stormy night, but never reached the town.

After crossing the bridge, I met a hair-lipped boy. He was ragged and shoeless. I felt sorry for him, so I said, "Little fellow, would you like to earn a nickel?" "Yes, ma'am," was the quick reply.

I then placed the money in his hand, and told him to accompany me to Mrs. Eckles' door.

On reaching it, I rapped gently, and was shown into the room where the Angel of Death was hovering near. Upon entering, I beheld the mother kneeling by the bedside of her dying child. I walked up to where she knelt, placed my hand upon her arm, and said: "Good morning, madam. I am Mrs. John

Beard, from Winston, N. C., and have come to assist and sympathize with you in your distress. I heard of it a few moments ago, and came at once. Isn't there something that I can do to relieve the little sufferer?"

The poor woman looked up into my face, and exclaimed: "Lady, you possess a kind heart, but there's nothing you can do that would save my boy's life."

She then motioned me to be seated, and continued: "You would not care to have him live, if you could see how badly he is hurt."

After I had been seated about five minutes, the child breathed its last. I shall never forget the scene. There before me lay the mangled form of little Benny. He had been crushed beyond recognition by the mighty wheels of the locomotive. Only a few hours before he had left home for the purpose of refilling the coal-chest, and had nearly completed his task when the engine backed over him, and now he lay a lifeless corpse in the home of his widowed mother.

I remained with the grief-stricken parent for some time after her boy had passed away, then told her that I must be going, as on the morrow I intended leaving the city, and in order to be in readiness, would be compelled to return to my apartments and finish the packing I had begun a few moments previous to Benny's accident.

Before taking my departure, I placed a silver dollar into the widow's hand, and implored her to bear up as best she could beneath her weight of sorrow.

I said, "I, too, am a mother, and have a little babe on the Golden Shore; therefore, understand how to sympathize with you."

Just as I was passing out at the doorway, the poor woman caught me by the arm, and said: "Lady, please leave your address, so that we may write to

you at some future day. We shall never forget your kindness."

In a few moments more, I had written my address, handed it to her, pressed her hand, then left her with her dead.

On leaving the widow's cottage, I beheld in the distance the main portion of the city, and said to myself, "Oh! if I only were a little bird, I'd spread my wings and fly back to my own native State, without returning to the spot from whence I fled."

At this moment I recalled to mind a poem I had once recited when a child at school. The remembrance of the poem brought tears to my eyes, and I thought, oh, how many years have flown by on the wings of time since I was a little girl, standing in the presence of a large audience, addressing them thus:

" I wish I were a little bird,
Among the leaves to dwell;
I'd scale the skies with gladness,
Or seek some lonely dell.

" My morning song should celebrate
The glories of the earth;
My evening hymn ring gladly
With a thrill of ceaseless mirth," etc.

It isn't worth while to continue the poem, as many of you are already familiar with it.

As I walked along, thinking of the past and present, I heard a childish voice cry out: "There! there! mother, I knew the good lady would come this way again!"

On looking up, I beheld my little hair-lipped friend and his mother seated in the doorway of their humble cottage. . The moment I laid eyes upon the female I knew that she had never known many of the pleasures of this world. So I tossed her boy a dime, the last penny I had in my purse, bowed to them and passed on.

CHAPTER X.

MISERY! MISERY! MORE MISERY!

It was not until 2 p. m. that I reached Mrs. Jones' residence; and on entering my room I burst out crying, for I could not banish from my mind the mangled form in the cot on the mountain.

After I had given full vent to my feelings, I arose from the chair on which I was sitting, bathed my face, and then began the work I had left undone. Presently all was finished; the last article had been packed, and the trunks were now ready for the station.

While packing my trunks I had not forgotten the Kingsbury family, and had laid aside something for each member, as a souvenir of my presence among them.

A few days before John had said, "Ida, you must be very careful that you do not let Mrs. Jones or my uncle's family find out that we intend leaving the city. Should they do so, they might hold our baggage for room rent and board."

I just supposed the board bill John had reference to was for the children and I; and you can imagine my surprise when, on going over to the Kingsbury House, I learned that my husband was due his uncle \$45 for board, as he had never paid them a cent since his arrival among them. His excuse for not doing so was that I was extravagant, and demanded all of his wages, leaving him nothing—not even enough to clothe himself.

I told them that I had only received \$35 out of \$244, the amount John had been paid while in J. D.

Dickens' employ. I said, "Now, I will leave you to judge whether or not I was the extravagant one, or whether he spent the money himself."

At this moment, Uncle Lawrence, who was sitting at the head of the table, arose from his seat, and exclaimed:

"Here, Ida, is my pistol; take it and blow that villain's brains out! It fairly makes my blood boil within me to think of how he came here and tried his best to lower you in our estimation, by leaving the impression that you were a perfect shrew—spending every cent of money he could rake and scrape. He also told us that you were the cause of his failure in Winston. But, thank God, you appeared upon the scene at the last moment, and we have found you to be a lady—far that low-down cur's superior—and now I am determined that you shall know all in regard to his mode of living while in this city."

At these remarks my husband left the table, picked up a little tracer that was lying on the sewing machine, and, like a panther when ready to spring upon its prey, glided to where I was standing, and would have inflicted a severe, if not fatal, wound upon my head had not Miss Kingsbury cried out:

"John Beard! is it possible that you intend murdering Ida right here before our eyes?"

John dropped the tracer to the floor, and stood trembling, as a murderer would have done while in the act of mounting the scaffold.

Mr. Kingsbury then told his wife to accompany me into an adjacent room, and when there tell me all in regard to John's life during the past fourteen weeks.

Oh, God! When she had finished her story, I felt as though a dagger had been thrust to my heart. For I learned how John had spent his time with the vile

women of the place; and not being satisfied with this, had separated a man and his wife also. On re-entering the dining-room it seemed to me as though I was going to hear my death warrant read—and so I was. I walked up to where my husband stood, placed my hand upon his arm, and said:

“Poor wretch! Once more I will give you a chance to vindicate yourself! Tell me, oh, tell me, do they speak the truth?”

John turned pale and bowed his head, and answered:

“I suppose so.”

I said, “Very well, then; from this time forth you and I are aliens to each other. On to-morrow morning I shall return to my own State, while you remain here to finish the life you have begun.”

At first I hardly knew whether to credit the story I had heard, as John had written the most affectionate letters you ever read, and in them had told me how highly he had spoken of me to his uncle’s family and how anxious they were to meet me. But when I heard the words “I suppose so” spoken, from my husband’s lips, I knew that all was over between us, for I could never, never place confidence in him again. At the same time I felt sorry for him. He had been completely caught in his own trap before being aware of it, and now would go from bad to worse. His end—oh, what would it be? I could keep back the tears no longer, so repaired to Mrs. Jones’ residence. On entering my apartments there, I said to myself:

“Now, I can interpret the dream I had before leaving home. Here in this city I have died—yes, the last spark of life has gone out, and I shall return to Winston to bury my past. The poor, broken heart I

will carry back with me a true emblem of the casket in my dream. I then noticed lying on the table the things I had intended distributing among the Kingsbury family; so I said:

"Well, I must return to the boarding-house for the purpose of presenting the souvenirs, and also bidding my relatives goodbye, as I would leave on the early morning train before the family were astir.

On re-entering the dining-room I beheld about twenty-five machinists seated at the table, and after I had said goodbye to uncle's family, these people clad in blue spoke up, saying:

"Aren't you going to say 'goodbye' to us, too?"

I turned around, and with a polite bow, said:

"Goodbye, gentlemen! On my return to Winston I shall remember you with kindness."

As I was leaving the room, I heard them say:

"Hurrah! hurrah, for North Carolina! Mrs. Beard is a lady if there ever was one!"

In the hallway I met my uncle, and told him that the moment I reached home I would send money back to pay mine and the children's board.

He said, "No. You shall do nothing of the kind. But keep what you have, and get a divorce from John Beard at once. You can get one on my own evidence. Should your attorneys desire my deposition I will gladly give it, and will assist you in every way possible, and I am sure that Chief of Police Watkins will do the same, for if ever he hated a human being on earth it is John Beard."

I then bid uncle goodbye, and once more returned to Dr. Jones' residence, where I dressed myself preparatory to leaving the city, as I had no idea of retiring for the night—was afraid to do so on account of being robbed by John. Aunt had cautioned me that,

whatever I did, not to allow my husband to get hold of a cent of money, as he had already declared that, in case he did so, he would take the other end of the road, going to Columbus, Ohio, instead of returning with me to Winston.

A few hours after the racket at the Kingsbury House, John came to me crying, and said that if I would agree to pay his way back home, he would promise to lead an upright life from the time he reached the place. Fool! fool! that I was, to do as he requested me. The amount spent in bringing him home would have purchased food for his hungry children long after he had deserted them.

Soon after I had donned my travelling costume, John entered the room and informed me that our trunks would be carried to the depot some time that evening—between 10 and 11 o'clock—as we would not leave on the regular train, but would board a sleeper that would pass through there from Cincinnati at 4 a. m., and in this way would reach Roanoke at least an hour earlier than we would otherwise.

I said, "Well, I don't know that I am particular about reaching Roanoke at any certain time. Why should we be?"

John then told me that he had a reason for doing so, but did not state what it was. I afterwards learned, and was not surprised at his being in a hurry to leave Bluefield; for most of us feel better running at large than we would were we placed behind the bars.

Well, I had agreed to leave on the early train, so seated myself in a rocking chair, and began to read. John wanted to know whether I did not intend retiring. I told him no, I believed that I preferred reading in preference to sleeping.

My remarks worried him no little, and from behind my paper I could see that he would have liked to have sent forth a volley of oaths, but did not dare do so just at this period, as I happened to be carrying the purse.

Presently John began snoring at a terrible rate, and I knew that he had at last fallen asleep; so I arose from my chair and glided across the room to where I had concealed the money. Thirty-five dollars of the amount I placed on my person, and \$20 went into my purse to purchase our tickets home. Then I heard the whistle blowing for 3 o'clock. So I said, "Well, only one more hour in this miserable hole, before I leave with the hope of never returning."

At half-past 3 I heard the porter from the Kingsbury House calling me. He said, "Oh, Mrs. Beard, you all had better be getting up, or you will be left. Your train will pass through here in a few minutes."

I said, "All right; thank you, Lemon"; tossed him a dime, and told him goodbye also, as he had been very kind to me during my stay at the hotel.

(From my early childhood I had been taught to treat servants with kindness.)

After the porter had returned to his post of duty, I bathed my face, brushed my hair, then awoke the children and soon all was ready.

Before calling John, I looked at him and wondered whether it would be best to take him with me or leave him where he was. While I was standing at his bedside he opened his eyes, and was up in a moment, saying:

"Why, I declare; I believe my little girl had intended leaving her old John. It's a good thing she didn't, or he would have been following her in a hurry."

Just before taking our departure, John placed his arm around my waist, and I shall never forget his beating heart as he pressed me to his bosom and implored me to look him in the face and say that I did not believe half of what the vile wretches there had told me.

I looked at him and said, "John, they may have prevaricated to some extent, but my own eyes have not deceived me. Then, you remember, you told me a few days ago that you had not been true to me for the last six years. I think I had proof enough of it before leaving home. How about the widow, and also the woman you have furnished with literature during the past two years?"

John made no reply to my remarks, but started to push me from him, then drew me to his side again. I suppose he happened to think of who was to purchase the tickets home.

On going down stairs, I met Mrs. Jones in the hallway. She, too, was up and ready to bid me goodbye. As I extended my hand she threw her arms around my neck, and for the moment wept like a child; then told me that she was glad, for my sake, that I was going back to old North Carolina, as it was also her native State, and she would be delighted to accompany me. We spent a few seconds in saying goodbye to each other, then, in company with the children and my husband, I repaired to the station.

Upon entering the door of the reception room, John said, "Well, we will leave here in about five minutes; so I had better get the tickets at once."

I told him that I would purchase the tickets myself.

He looked at me with vengeance, and said, "The very idea of your doing so, when you never bought a ticket or checked a trunk in your life!"

I told him that it was never too late to learn, and that I would begin by taking my first lesson right away, and without saying more, I stepped up to the ticket office and asked the agent to let me have two tickets and a half to Winston, N. C. I then placed before him a twenty dollar bill, and after taking out the amount due him, he handed me back the change, which John said he would take charge of; but before he had a chance to pick up the money, I did so myself, and told him I was capable of attending to my own affairs.

John laughed and said, "Well, so far you are all O. K.; but what will you do next?"

I told him to wait and see. I then asked the agent to direct me to the baggage room. When there, I told them that on the previous evening I had placed two trunks in their care, and would now like to have checks for them. They did not comply with my request, and I wondered what could be the matter.

John began laughing again.

Then the thought occurred to me that perhaps I ought to produce my tickets. I did so, and received the checks at once.

John began laughing right, and said, "Well, I believe you could travel, after all."

I told him all I needed was the money.

About this time Basil cried out, "Mamma, our train is coming!" and in a few minutes we were all on board, bound for Winston—yes, for dear old home!

The car in which we were was crowded to overflowing—four different States being represented.

All at once John began flirting with a dark-complexioned girl, who looked as if though she had not bathed her face for the past three days. I heard her say that she was from Cincinnati, and intended stop-

ping in Roanoke. The girl seemed to be alone, with the exception of the attention she received from the conductor. On passing through the car he would cast a glance and smile in her direction.

After hearing her conversation, I thought, now, John will call for his ticket in a few minutes. I had scarcely ceased thinking this, when he came over to where I was sitting, placed his arm upon the back of the seat, and said:

"What is my little darling studying about? I wonder whether she loves her old John?"

I said, "Oh, yes, certainly I do"; and I knew what was coming next, so was ready with an answer.

When John asked for his ticket, I said, "No; I purchased the tickets with my own money, and expect to hold on to them until after leaving Roanoke; then I shall turn them over to Captain Stanfield."

John turned red in the face, and would have cursed me had it not been that he had an eye to getting what little money I had on reaching Winston.

When John saw that I was determined not to give up the tickets, he once more seated himself near the dark-complexioned girl, while I passed away the time by viewing the scenery along the road, and wondering how my life would end. I almost wished for death, and came near having my wish granted, as it was only by mere chance that we escaped a collision a few miles further on. I have wished since that the heavy freight that was bearing down upon us had dashed onward through our car, and in this way ended all my suffering in a moment's time. But the One above knew best, and spared my life for some other purpose, I suppose.

On my way home I enjoyed the scenery very much, especially from East Radford on the Roanoke, and

was surprised when I learned that it was 2 p. m., and we at our destination, or, at least, at the place where we were to change cars for North Carolina.

On alighting from the train, John assisted me into the reception room at the depot, then said that he had noticed W. W. Workman standing on the platform, and if I had no objection he believed he would go and speak to him.

I said, "All right," and saw nothing more of my husband until a few minutes before leaving for Winston. I just supposed that he had gone to say good-bye to his Cincinnati bird, therefore intended boarding our train alone, if he had not returned in time.

CHAPTER XI.

BACK TO THE "OLD NORTH STATE."

After leaving Roanoke, John began his sickening lovemaking again. I paid no attention to his idle prattle; so he soon changed his conversation, and wanted to know where I intended stopping on reaching Winston.

I told him I had not thought much about the matter, but guessed that we would make our home with Mrs. Hardy for a day or two, until other arrangements could be made.

When we reached Mayodan, John purchased a lunch for himself, and distributed a portion of it between Robah and Basil. They all three remained standing on the platform until the lunch had disappeared. Then my husband entered the car and exclaimed, "Why, mamma, I forgot you!"

Just at this moment a salesman, who was sitting to our left, said, "My dear sir, a few years ago you would not have forgotten her."

John said, "Perhaps not; but now 'de things am changed about the place, de darkies all am gone.'"

The salesman did not reply to this, as my husband had supposed he would, but turned away, with an expression on his face, as if to say, "You are no gentleman, or you would not treat a lady so."

On nearing Winston, I became very despondent. I had a presentment that something terrible was going to happen, and when the train slowed up in front of the Norfolk and Western depot, I could scarcely realize where I was, until I heard Sandy, the porter from Hotel Jones, say, "Step right this way"; then knew

that my feet were on North Carolina soil, and I at home once more.

So I gave instructions for my baggage to be sent to the Hardy House, and afterwards repaired there myself. The landlady's daughter came to the door, and I asked her whether they could accommodate us for a few days.

She said, "Why, certainly; walk right into the parlor, and I will send mother at once, as I have just started out for a little airing, but will return soon."

While waiting for Mrs. Hardy to make her appearance, John asked me for a dollar; said he was suffering with a severe headache, and would be compelled to do something for it. I handed him the money, and told him to try something else besides bromo-seltzer, as I had a perfect horror of the stuff, on account of his having used such a quantity already. John kissed me, and promised to do as I requested him; then left the parlor, and did not return until supper time.

On making his appearance, he seemed to take great delight in showing me his bromo-seltzer bottle. My heart sank within me, for I knew that he intended continuing in his old way, and that there would be no more happiness for me.

After eating supper, John told me that he was going to spend the evening with his father, and would not be back until late, as he had some important business to attend to. So I was left alone, and retired early, but could not sleep for wondering what would become of us.

About 1 a. m. John entered our room, looking as if though he had just returned from his own funeral. I asked him why he seemed so despondent.

He said, "Oh, well, everything's the matter. Father

is very angry because I came back to Winston, after promising never to return."

I said, "Well, are you compelled to do as your father says?"

John said, "Yes; under the circumstances I am. And in order to avoid a fuss, I suppose we had better make arrangements to leave here in a few days, or, at least, I will go on ahead and send for you and the children."

Nothing more was said that night about the matter, and on the following day he asked me for three dollars to pay old man Levi for a coat he had purchased before going to Bluefield. I gave my husband the amount he had called for, thinking that he intended paying the debt, but I afterwards learned that he never went near Mr. Levi's place of business. What became of the money I do not know. I suppose it was spent for opium and bromo-seltzer.

During John's stay in the city he was seen frequenting his old haunts again, and each time he returned to our room he would question me very closely as to the amount of money I had in bank. I told him \$35 was every cent I had, but that he should share it as long as it lasted, just so he would try to do half-way right and find employment here if possible. I could see that he had no idea of doing so, but was making other arrangements as the days passed on, and on Saturday morning before taking his departure he called for \$2. I gave it to him, and he promised to be back to an early dinner. After giving him the amount he desired, I noticed that he was laughing to himself, so I said:

"I suppose you intend fooling me, and only made the promise in order to get the money."

He kissed me, as usual, and said:

"No, I did nothing of the kind, and will be home by 12, or before."

He then left the Hardy House and did not return until 10.30 that evening. On doing so, he called for money enough to get a shave. I asked him what in all the world had become of the money I had given him on leaving home. He then began cursing me for the first time since our arrival, and said that the money had been spent, and he wanted more, and that in a hurry. I told him I would give him a dollar if he would promise to have his moustache shaved off, as I did not admire his looks with it on.

He said, "No. I am growing my moustache for a purpose, therefore, it will remain just as it is, whether you like it or not." He fairly snatched the dollar from my hand and left the room in a terrible rage.

Before retiring I placed his laundry and bath water in readiness, so that he should have nothing to complain of on his return. About 2 a. m. he made his appearance in the same state that he left in, and on Sunday morning refused to accompany me to church, but finally did so. On our return home he told me that he was going out for a little stroll and would be back in time for he and I to take one later in the evening. During his absence I whiled away the hours by reading and writing a letter to my friend, Mrs. Dr. Jones. I was in the act of sealing my mis-sive when John entered our apartments, looking very much distressed over something, so I said:

"I don't believe I care about going out for a walk, as I am not feeling well!"

He told me to get my hat and we would take a short stroll at any rate. I did as he requested me, and we walked up street as far as the Methodist Episcopal church. On our way back we met the Cincin-

nati girl. She and John seemed to recognize each other at once. I suppose they had been companions a few hours before. After passing the woman my husband asked me whether I remembered her. I told him I did, and thought I had a cause for doing so.

On reaching our boarding-house we found supper waiting us, and after doing justice to the viands placed before us, we repaired to the parlor a few moments, then to our own apartments, where John began stroking my hair and declaring that I was entirely too good for him; he said he did not feel that he was worthy of me in the least. Presently he began walking the full length of the room, then came up to where I was sitting and said:

"Ida, you have always thought your surmise in regard to the Park Avenue affair was correct, and I am now going to tell you that it was. The Bluefield matter was also true, but you need not cry nor worry about it. What's already done can't be undone, so let's retire and forget all as soon as possible."

I could not utter a sound, but thought—forget all!—how could I? And wondering how he, the vile wretch, could do so after wounding my feelings as he had.

On Monday morning John arose early and wanted to know whether I had rested well during the night. I told him that I had slept but little, and never expected to sleep soundly again.

CHAPTER XII.

JOHN AT LAST DESERTS ME.

Monday and Tuesday he spent most of his time away from home.

About 5 o'clock on Tuesday evening he entered our room with his face looking very red and swollen, as if he had been drinking or weeping—I think the latter, as I detected no signs of drink. I suppose within him he had been fighting a great battle, trying to decide upon which course to pursue. Whether to listen to his father and desert his innocent wife and children, or whether to do his duty by remaining with and caring for them as a husband and father should.

And, now that he had decided upon the former, the traces were still visible upon his face. He appeared to be very restless, and asked whether supper was ready. I told him I guessed not, or would have heard the bell. After the evening meal was over my husband insisted upon retiring immediately, as he was suffering with a severe headache. I offered to bathe his head in camphor, but this he refused me, and again told me that I was too good for him.

It was not long after I had retired before I was asleep and dreaming of a murder being committed in the room, and of the murderer trying to make his escape by way of the window. I awoke at once and beheld John standing by the mantel with an open knife in his hand. He ran his thumb along the sharp edge, then drew back as though in the act of sending the fatal blow home to his victim's heart. After this he walked over to the window and stood looking downward. I suppose he was measuring the distance

from there to the ground below. As I lay watching him, I imagined I could feel the cold steel as it pierced my heart! Oh, what was I to do? Presently my husband left the window and returned to the mantel, and as he did so I heard him say—

“I wonder what time it is?”

Just then Basil called for water. His doing so interfered with John’s intentions, and my life was spared once more.

I asked my husband why he was not in bed asleep, as he had been so anxious to retire. He told me that his head was hurting him, and that he felt better sitting up. And the villain deserted me without knowing that I had been an eye-witness to his manœuvres on the previous night.

On Wednesday morning my husband arose at 7 o’clock in a nervous condition, and, after eating breakfast, asked me for \$10. He told me that he had rented a house from W. E. Franklin, and would be compelled to pay the first month’s rent in advance.

I said, “Well, I would like to take a look at the place before paying for it, and, if you have no objections, we will walk out in that direction after awhile.”

He told me that he had other business to attend to, therefore could not accompany me just then, but would do so in the afternoon, and I should be ready by 1 o’clock.

Before leaving our room he pressed me to his bosom and kissed me twice, then looked me straight in the face and said:

“Old John loves his little girl more than life itself!”

He must have possessed a heart of adamant, or he could not have done this—knowing as he did this, that he was deserting me at the time.

Ah, well! his day of suffering is yet to come, as God never allows the wicked to go unpunished.

John knew that I took grief to heart, and I suppose he thought that in a few days I would be in my grave, then he would be a free man once more, so far as having a wife was concerned. But his conscience—what of that? He had none, or he would have made some provision for his hapless children, instead of leaving them to the mercies of this cruel world. Now, they must grow up uneducated, and, perhaps, come to some bad end on account of it.

That morning after John had left me, I again had a presentiment that something terrible was going to happen. However, I endeavored to while away the hours by writing to a friend of mine in Roanoke. Finally, I became restless, and abandoned the idea of letter writing entirely.

As the dinner hour approached, I made preparations for it, and also for accompanying my husband in order to inspect the house he intended renting. I waited for him until half-past 1, then, when he failed to make his appearance, I ate my dinner alone. On entering the dining-room someone remarked that Mr. Beard had gone to Lynchburg to accept a position.

I said, "Oh, I guess not; or at least I know nothing about his going."

This was all that was said about the matter, and after I had finished eating, informed Mrs. Hardy that I had an engagement with the dentist, therefore I would go to his office at once, and that if Mr. Beard came, please tell him to wait for me at the house, as I would return in about an hour.

At the dentist's office I met a young gentleman, who said:

"Mrs. Beard, I suppose you are a widow now! I

bid John goodbye when he left this morning. He told me that he was going to Burlington to take charge of a drug store."

I looked at the young man in a bewildered way, and said:

"What do you all mean by trying to lead me to believe that John has left the city? I know that he has done nothing of the kind! Surely, he would not have left without saying a word to me!"

On returning to my boarding house, I learned that John had not been to dinner. I wondered at his absence, but still thought perhaps he had gone home with his father.

That evening at the supper table, Mr. Newton Fletcher informed me that I would receive a letter from my husband on the following morning, as he was seen addressing one to me before leaving the station. Mr. Fletcher also told me that a young gentleman asked John why he was leaving without my knowing it, and he said:

"Oh, well, she always cries, and I did not care to remember her in tears."

I suppose he thought my tears might soften his hard heart at the last moment, and he would be compelled to remain, although against his father's wishes.

However, he will always have the pleasure of remembering me as I stood at the window, smiling and waving my handkerchief in his direction.

The night after John's departure was a stormy one, and in keeping with my thoughts. I did not weep on account of his deserting me, but for the children's sake. I wondered what would become of them, knowing that in my frail condition I would be unable to make a support for them. I said to myself, how could the author of their being leave them to perish upon the streets of the city? What cause had he for

doing so? It was his duty to have carried them with him or provided for them elsewhere, and none but a heartless parent would have done as he did.

After remaining awake all night, I arose early and went down to the parlor, where I anxiously awaited the arrival of the postman. Presently he came, bearing in his hand a yellow-looking letter. At first I thought it was a telegram, and wondered why the postman was the bearer. On breaking the seal, my eyes rested upon these words:

WINSTON STATION, March 18th, 1896.

My Darling Mamma:

Don't be worried at my leaving, for I am obliged to go somewhere where I can get something to do; besides they are fixing to get me in trouble in Winston, and I must go where I can be a white man. Now, mamma, take it calmly. You know I love you, and just as soon as I get something to do I will let you know and send for you. I think I will go from here to Lynchburg to try and get a position in an auction house. I will let you hear from me as soon as I stop. Now, don't cry, nor bother, for I am sure to find a job at something, and you know I can't find one here. The reason I didn't let you know was because I was afraid you wouldn't let me go.

Be a good girl and bear up manfully. You will be able to live longer on what you have alone than you could with me there helping you eat it up. Let Robah get to work as soon as possible, and do the best you can until I can make something.

Your affectionate old boy,

J. L. BEARD.

I thought to myself, "live longer on what you have!" What had I? One week's board, and then my money would all be gone, and I, with two children, turned out upon the streets to perish. I asked the advice of my friends as to what I should do, and they advised me to remain where I was until the end of the week, as they were almost certain I would hear from John by that time. I told them I never expected to hear from him again—or, at least, not soon.

Not knowing what to do, I remained with Mrs.

Hardy until the following week, and by this time I only had \$2 left. I looked at the children as they lay asleep, and thought, it's well they do not know what the future has in store for them. At first everyone predicted that I would desert the children, as their father had done. But I said:

"No! They are my own flesh and blood, and I will cling to them, and if starvation comes, we will share it together!"

So I made up my mind that I would go in search of a room. Just before starting out someone rapped upon the door. On opening it I once more beheld a madstone patient standing before me. He paid me \$5 in advance, and I applied the stone. After he had taken his departure I set out room hunting in a little better heart, as I then had \$7 instead of \$2. Which way to go I didn't know, but finally decided on taking a look at the rooms that were to let in the Starbuck block. I found them very convenient and the rent reasonable; so I paid \$3 in advance for one month, and took possession the following day. Well, now, I had secured the rooms, but how was I to furnish them? I had nothing, not even a pillow, to begin with. However, I made up my mind to do the best I could, and, perhaps there would be a way provided by which I would be able to obtain a few pieces of furniture. While engaged in scrubbing the floors of my new apartments, I heard footsteps, and on looking up, I beheld, standing in the doorway, A. H. Eller, a rising young lawyer of our city. After addressing me in a very polite manner, he asked whether I had furniture to place in the rooms I was cleaning.

I said, "No, sir; I haven't a piece, unless father opens his heart and sends me something from home."

Mr. Eller then said, "Well, Mrs. Beard, you have

my entire sympathy, and if I can assist you in any way, will do so with pleasure."

With my eyes filled with tears, I thanked him for his kindness. He bade me good morning, and turned as if in the act of leaving the building, but came back to say that as he was preparing to move into his new quarters in a few days, he would have a piece of matting which he would not need, therefore if I would accept it, I would be perfectly welcome to it. I told him that I couldn't bear the idea of his making me a present of the matting, so would offer him some literature I had in return. He glanced at the books and said:

"Yes; I would appreciate them very much, but still I hate to take them from you."

I insisted on his doing so, as I had read the books and only kept them for future reference.

Now I had the promise of a covering for my floor, and this was a beginning towards housekeeping. Presently father came and told me that I might have a few things from home if I would send for them. So I called to a drayman who happened to be passing, and told him that I would need his services that afternoon, and that he should have his dray at my father's residence about 2 o'clock.

Such a time as I had in obtaining the things father had offered me! Mrs. Crumpler forbade the drayman going upstairs after them, and declared that she would split each piece into splinters with her hatchet as they were brought down! It was a scene long to be remembered. There I stood in one doorway, Sister Nell in another with broomstick in her hand, and our stepmother standing at the entrance of her boudoir clasping a hatchet, while father occupied the center of the hall with a paint bucket in his hand, and saying—

"Well, I am sure Ida has a right to a few pieces of her own mother's furniture."

Then sister spoke up and said :

"Yes, and she shall have them, too; so walk up, mister, walk up; don't be afraid of that old woman over there." With these remarks, Nell mounted the stairs and began throwing things right and left in the room above. Finally she called the drayman to come ahead and carry down what she intended me to have, and father accompanied the boy—leaving Mrs. Crumpler and I alone. We gazed at each other for a moment, then she began calling me by all manner of names she could think of; said I was a beggar, and had better leave the house at once if I knew what was good for me!

I said, "Madam, I am aware of the fact that my father reigns here yet awhile; therefore, will remain as long as I please; and, furthermore, I want you to distinctly understand that I am one of the birdies of the old nest, who expects to fly in and out whenever she gets ready."

By this time the furniture was nearing the lower step; so my stepmother ran to the bureau, and, after snatching the key, exclaimed :

"Well, I guess Ida Beard will leave off locking up her valuables with this!"

She then returned to her post, and, amid broom-stick, hatchet and paint bucket, the things at last reached the dray.

Among the things that father had given me was the old parlor suit—the one used by me when a young lady at home. I appreciated these pieces of furniture very much; and that night, as Basil lay asleep on the settee, I recalled to mind the many happy moments I had spent in years gone by, when my life seemed a

lovely flower just beginning to bloom. Little did I think in those days that the rose would be plucked by a careless passer-by, then trampled upon, and left to die, long before its time.

I shall never forget the first night I spent in the Star-buck block. It was a pitiable sight to see my two children and I huddled together in that cold, bare room. We had nothing with which to build a fire; neither had we a light, save that of the moon. I made the children as comfortable as possible, and they were soon asleep. After they had been slumbering for some time, I began walking the floor in order to keep warm, and also wondering what I should do to earn a livelihood. Then, all at once, the thought occurred to me that I wrote a pretty fair hand, and why not try something along this line? So, on the following morning, after I had purchased, on time, a cheap bedstead and mattress, I called upon W. B. Ellis at his factory, and asked whether he had anything for a lady to do in the way of addressing envelopes.

The wealthy tobacco manufacturer looked at me and said, "Well, Mrs. Beard, there's nothing at present, as business has been very dull for some time, and I have been compelled to do away with the extensive advertising I did in former years. However, if times get better, and I see that I can give you employment, will do so with pleasure."

I thanked him and left the office—not discouraged, as most women would have been, but more determined than ever to obtain work if it could be found.

On my way back up street, I called upon the different merchants of the city, thinking, perhaps, some of them would have a vacancy to be filled; but there was none. I returned to my rooms tired and hungry, but still possessing a brave heart.

I said, "This is only my first attempt at seeking employment; therefore, shall try again; and if I fail, will try once more."

At this moment I thought of a song I used to sing, and, after brushing the tears from my eyes, I arose to prepare our frugal meal; then I heard footsteps on the stairs. At first I made sure it was the children coming; but, instead, it proved to be a waiter from the Hardy House, bearing a tray filled with delicious viands, sent me by the landlady; so there was no need for me preparing more. And that same evening I received from Hotel Jones a week's provisions.

I said, "Well, I have friends left, at any rate."

On the following Saturday, my aunt, Lusetta Stewart, brought in from the country necessary bedding for the children and I.

So, in this way, we began our housekeeping.

After I had made a thorough canvass of the city in order to obtain employment, I at last decided upon opening up a boarding house; but how was I to begin, with nothing? I studied over the matter for a day or two, then concluded to make the attempt, fail or succeed—one or the other I was sure to do. I knew that unless I did something in the way of earning a support for myself, friends would soon tire of supplying me with the necessaries of life.

Before beginning to keep boarders, Sister Nell was very kind to me indeed. At nightfall she would come to my rooms, bringing with her food and fuel. On entering, she would always say:

"Here, Ida, take the things and let me go. I know I ought not to come, but still I couldn't bear the idea of you and the children being cold and hungry this near home."

Sometimes she remained with us ten or fifteen

minutes, then away she would go, leaving me to wonder why it was that mother was called Home just at the time her child needed her influence most.

Sometimes I almost felt as though I could tear my eyeballs from their sockets, when I compared the present with the past.

While in this state of mind, I began keeping boarders.

I will always remember the first table I spread for the boarders. It was really amusing to see me arranging viands and the few pieces of ware aunt had given me. I was so afraid that something would be wrong, and that it wouldn't seem like a boarding house. I prepared for my boarders as though they were guests coming to tea, and on leaving the dining room, they each declared themselves highly pleased with their first meal.

In the center of the table I had placed a lovely pyramid of flowers; the napkins were arranged in the shape of a lily, and the viands consisted of fried chicken, fresh butter, pickles, honey, banana cake, strawberries and cream, lightbread, milk, and tea.

CHAPTER XIII.

FRIENDS AND FOES ALL ALIKE IN A LIFETIME.

I was just beginning with this new enterprise when Robah, my eldest son, was stricken down with a severe case of typhoid fever. He lay at death's door for fourteen weeks.

During this time I received a letter from my husband—the first he had written me since his departure. He was then in Cincinnati, Ohio, and was soon to leave for Charlestown, W. Va. His letter was filled with the most endearing words anyone ever read. He declared that he would return to me if he was forced to walk every step of the way home, and ended by saying that I was the one woman on earth for him, and oh, how he longed to clasp me to his bosom and kiss me as of yore.

At first I made up my mind that I would pay no attention to this missive; then I said, "No, the author of it is the father of my children, and it's his duty to assist in rearing them." So I answered John's letter, informing him of Robah's illness and of our destitute condition. I told him to come at once, or send money to purchase medicine for our dying child.

After this, letters came daily, but not a cent accompanied them. My husband would always say that he intended sending money soon, and that, if Robah died, do the best I could.

One evening I was told that my child could not possibly survive through the night. So I wired his father, and he refused to accept the telegram.

On the following day the messenger here at home handed me the message they had received from the office in Charlestown. These were the contents:

I stood gazing at the messenger, and wondered how a father could refuse to accept a message from home, when he was expecting to hear of his child's death at any moment.

In a day or two after this I received a few lines from John, saying, "I guess you were surprised at my refusing to accept the telegram; the messenger was kind enough to tell me that Robah wasn't dead, so I thought it of no use to spend money unnecessarily."

He also said that he didn't see why my children should suffer, when I had quite a number of wealthy relatives in the city. I answered his letter immediately, and told him that my wealthy relatives didn't propose taking care of John Beard's offspring, when they had a strong and healthy father to work for them.

Robah's illness now seems as though it was a dream. When he was first taken, my friends came to me and said:

"Mrs. Beard, you will be compelled to send your child to the hospital, as you are too frail to wait upon him; and, besides, you have never nursed a case of typhoid fever in your life."

I said, "I can do what others have done, therefore my child shall remain with me, and if it's God's will to take him, I will have the pleasure of knowing that I did all I could for him until the last."

I was forced to close the doors of my boarding house, in order to give Robah the attention he required. He would allow no one but me to wait upon him, so my task was a hard one. And had it not been for the nourishing food sent me by relatives and

friends, I, too, would have fallen a victim to the terrible disease.

The day Robah was stricken down, Dr. Gray informed me that I had six weeks of constant watching before me. The moment he told me this, I burst out crying, and said:

"Oh, how am I to pass through it all without help or a cent of money?"

Then the kind-hearted physician placed his hand upon my arm, and said:

"Mrs. Beard, you have borne your troubles bravely so far; don't give up now; I will be with you, and your child shall not want for attention. I will do all I possibly can in order to save him."

Just then the door bell rang, and on answering it, I beheld an old gentleman and his grandchild in quest of the ever-ready madstone. I invited the parties in and requested them to be seated until I could wait upon them; then ran back to the room and informed Dr. Gray of my good luck.

He said, "Well, I knew the Lord would help you; so go and attend to your patient while I attend to mine."

I brushed away the tears that were still flowing from my eyes, then flew to apply the stone. Before doing so, the old gentleman paid me \$5 in advance, and I felt as wealthy as J. Gould himself, or, at least, I knew that I would be able to purchase something for my suffering child.

His illness will long be remembered by those who visited him, and I am sure that I will never forget my trying time. I not only had Robah's illness to contend with, but many other things as well. One part of the building was occupied by people with whom I didn't care to associate, and they did every-

thing imaginable to worry me. One woman bearing the name of Holish would bring her tin pan to my door and beat upon it with all her might. Twice I was forced to call in an officer in order to quell the racket. The Holish woman had a companion by the name of Phillips; she would dash water in my face and over my clothing whenever I passed through the hall, then call me all kinds of vile names.

At first I thought I would resent the insults, then I said, No, I am far these people's superior, and why should I stoop to parley with them, when I know that my good name will still live long, long after they have passed away.

There were also several young gentlemen occupying rooms in the same building, and, through kindness, offered to assist in nursing Robah. One young man, seeing my destitute condition, offered to loan me his lounge; but owing to the circumstances, I refused them all; however, I thanked the gentlemen, and told them that I hoped they would understand my position, and why I refused their kind offer.

The women across the hall overheard our conversation, and, instead of repeating it as it was spoken, they circulated the report that the young men of the city were paying my rent and supplying the children and I with food.

I paid no attention to all this idle prattle, more than I thought, well, there's one consolation, and that is that the villain to whom I gave my young life will have this to answer for, on account of leaving me to be trampled upon as he has done.

Among other things I had to contend with, was a notice from Mrs. E. Starbuck, requesting me to vacate her premises unless I could pay my rent promptly.

Owing to Robah's illness, I had failed to pay as I would have done otherwise.

After leaving the Starbuck block, the report reached my ear that I had been asked to vacate on account of charges against my personal character.

Of course I was very much wrought up over the affair, so wrote Mrs. E. Starbuck at once in regard to the above report.

The reply that I received to my note ran as follows :

WINSTON, N. C., Feb. 7th, 1898.

Mrs. Ida M. Beard.

DEAR MADAM:—Any report that you were requested to leave the Starbuck block on account of charges against your character is untrue.

Respectfully,

MRS. E. STARBUCK.

While engaged in packing preparatory to leaving the Starbuck block, Mrs. Holish entered my kitchen and began dashing water over me, completely ruining the dress I wore. After finishing her baptism, she brought forth her tin pan and began beating it at a terrible rate, saying that she intended giving me a farewell serenade. Mrs. Holish and her tin pan drew quite a crowd around the door. As I took my departure, she asked me where old John Beard was. I told her I hadn't the least idea, but supposed that he and old man Holish were sailing together in the same boat up the Ohio River.

On leaving the Starbuck block, I moved to a little cottage near the North Winston graded school, where I only remained one month, while waiting for another house that was undergoing repairs. As soon as it was finished, I took possession, and felt that I was beginning to live once more.

About this time I received my first \$5 from John. He wrote me that I ought to appreciate the money very much, as he had deprived himself of food and clothing in order to send me the above amount.

Right after this, he asked me to send him his silver-headed cane, as he missed it so much while out walking in the parks of an evening.

I answered his letter, thanking him for the money he had sent, and told him if he was in the condition he said he was, I didn't see but what some of the shrubbery in the parks would answer his purpose just as well, or at least he would be compelled to do without his silver-headed cane, as I had disposed of it to purchase bread for his hungry children.

I wonder if he thought I would believe the story he had written about his destitute condition. I am proud to say that I am not the fool he always represented me to be, and he will now see that his little fool has at last used him as her tool.

My husband continued to send me \$4 per week from the latter part of September, 1896, until February, 1897; then, all at once, he ceased, saying that he was out of employment, and that I should try to secure him a job here if possible. So, with my feet upon the bare ground, I visited the different tobacco factories, and finally obtained a position for my husband at \$75 per month and expenses paid. I wrote him that the firm wanted him here at once, and he had better come on the next train.

After waiting a week or more, I received a reply, saying that he didn't think \$75 enough, and unless the firm agreed to give him more, he would remain where he was, as he was expecting something better there in the spring, and hoped that by that time to place me, his little "darling," far above want.

I now know that, instead of a salary, it was his lovely bride that he was looking forward to. Well, they have my best wishes for a long life of usefulness and happiness—the centennial's own words to John and I seventeen years ago.

While occupying the little cottage on Liberty street, I was compelled to undergo many hardships.

Shortly after moving, I was informed of my Aunt Lusetta Stewart's sudden death, which was more of a shock to me than John's desertion. For it was aunt who came to me in my first hours of distress and spoke comforting words, saying:

"Now, Ida, I hope you will not grieve for the villain who has wrecked your life. He isn't worth a tear from your eyes. I have always known that he wasn't worthy of you, but still I said nothing, for I knew it was of no use to grieve over spilled milk. I want you to do the very best you can, and I will see that you do not perish!"

I can almost see her as she came daily, bringing with her something for mine and the children's comfort, and always a cheering word before taking her departure. I really believe that she grieved more over my troubles than I did myself. She seemed to be so afraid I would at last sink beneath the weight I bore. I told her that she must remember that I had inherited my mother's persevering powers, therefore she need have no fears about me giving up, as I would struggle on and on until the end.

After my aunt's death, I concluded to fulfill the dream I had in the Starbuck block. So, on New Year's eve, 1896, I began a brief biography of my life.

While awaiting Robah's return from watch meeting, I sat dozing in my rocking chair, and again dreamed of Cousin Newton Crumpler entering the room and presenting me with a pencil and tablet, telling me to begin my work with the new year. On opening my eyes, I noticed a tablet lying on the table; so began writing, and continued until 3 a. m., then

retired, feeling as though I was soon to accomplish a great feat.

I wrote my husband in regard to the work I had undertaken, and I could see by the tone of his letters that he laughed at the idea of me—his little fool—writing a book. However, he wished me much success, and hoped that I would not paint him the dark villain I would were I handling someone else!

In reply to his letters, I gave him to understand that I would paint him in his true colors, and nothing more. So far you see how I have handled the brush. The finishing touches will be given later on.

In the beginning of my work, friends advised me not to continue, as they were afraid my mind would be impaired on account of it; but I told them that I intended finishing what I had begun, regardless of all their predictions, and since that time I have struggled on under many difficulties. Many, many pages have been written by the glow of the fire, when I was too poor to purchase oil. Often have I gone without food in order to obtain material upon which to indite my thoughts.

Before leaving the spot I had fallen deeply in love with, I became involved in a little difficulty with an old gentleman by the name of Cox. Of him I had engaged one cord of seasoned wood—not a stick of any other kind was to be among it; so, on Saturday, February 6, 1896, he hauled the first load, and promised to finish the deal on the following Monday between 10 and 11 o'clock. I waited for Mr. Cox until 2 o'clock, then, when he failed to put in his appearance, I went on down street about my business. I called upon J. S. Dunn, paid him the rent, and the next place I visited was Bailey Bros.' factory, in order to ascertain whether they had heard from Mr. Beard,

and whether he intended accepting the position they had offered him. On returning home, I noticed that Mr. Cox was tossing the wood back over the fence, preparatory to hauling it away. I asked him what he meant by doing so, and he said:

“It means that I intend to have my wood. You can’t get it for nothing.”

I told him I fully intended paying him, and was ready to do so then if he had hauled the wood according to contract. On examining it, I found that over half of the cord was green instead of dry. However, as I was without fuel, I told him I would take it and pay him for it, and not to throw another stick across the fence. He paid no attention to me, but called a negro man into the yard to assist him in throwing out the wood. While engaged in his work he asked me where John Beard was, and why he left. I told him that if he would wait until I had time to unlock my door and get a kettle of boiling water, I would soon show him why John Beard left, and that if he insulted me again, I would have him arrested before 6 o’clock on the following evening. After this he did not tarry long, but knocked off two of my palings, and out he went, saying:

“Well, goodbye, until I see you again.”

I suppose that he became frightened after saying what he did, and thought he had better do something in order to protect himself, so went to the police and told them that I cursed him—a thing I was never guilty of in all my life. I laughed at the idea of even being accused of such an offense.

On Tuesday following the racket with the wood man, about 9 o’clock in the evening, some one rapped upon the door. I was frightened at first, thinking a messenger had been sent to inform me of my father’s

death, as he was not expected to live at that time. Before opening the door, I asked who it was that sought admittance.

The answer was, "A policeman, Mrs. Beard; I only want to speak to you a minute."

On opening the door, I beheld two burly officers of the law standing on the veranda. The moment I laid eyes upon them, I exclaimed, "Oh, my father's dead!"

The policeman said, "No, not that I know of. We have come to say that the Mayor requests you to appear before him to-morrow evening at half-past four."

I said, "What have I done that I should appear before the Mayor of the city?"

The officer whom I addressed seemed to possess a kind heart, so he said:

"Mrs. Beard, I don't know much about the matter, but think it's something in regard to a misunderstanding you and Mr. Cox had over a cord of wood."

I told the officer all right, I would appear in court on the following evening, as I wasn't afraid to face the world as to what I had said to Mr. Cox, and would be there at half-past four. After this, I closed the door and returned to my work—not frightened, as you might suppose, but only too glad of having the opportunity to avenge my wrong.

On seeking advice from an attorney, he advised me to treat the matter with silent contempt, but I told him no, a Crumpler was never known to shrink from duty, and I would not be the first to dishonor the name by doing so.

So, long before the time arrived, penniless and alone, I crossed the threshold of the police court. Upon entering, I looked neither to the right or left of me, but walked straight to the front, where I was met by Policeman Allen, one of my father's former employees, who presented me with a chair.

When seated, Mr. I. E. White, who was filling the Chief's place, remarked that I didn't seem at all scared.

I thought, why should I, knowing as I did that if I received justice at the hands of the Court, I would once more cross the threshold as the Hebrew children did from the fiery furnace.

When Court sat, the Mayor remarked that he had known me from childhood, and had never heard of me using profane language. He then read the warrant that had been issued for my arrest, charging me with cursing, swearing and causing a public nuisance.

After reading the warrant, he asked me to rise and answer to the charge preferred against me.

I remained seated, but in a firm, clear voice exclaimed:

"Not guilty, sir."

He then wanted to know whether I was ready for the trial to proceed.

I told him I supposed not, as my attorney wasn't present. Owing to previous engagement, he could not appear in my behalf until the following evening.

The Mayor said, "Well, the trial will be deferred until then."

I arose from my chair, and, after bidding the blue-coated officers good evening, I passed out, went to the market and purchased some steak, then returned home to prepare it.

While eating supper, I was told that my father was dying, so I went to his residence at once. On reaching there, I had quite a time in gaining admittance, as my stepmother declared that I should not enter father's room, and that if I persisted in doing so, she would put me out with her own hands, if there were twenty people within.

My uncle, who was sitting at father's bedside, said that he never witnessed such a scene before. He made sure Mrs. Crumpler would tear me to pieces, from the way she acted. Uncle afterwards said to me, "Ida, she reminds me of a tigress, and I think you did well to escape being torn to pieces."

I suppose that Mrs. Crumpler was afraid that father would tell me something about the will that she had forced him to sign—I will not say make, for I am confident it was none of father's making. He would not have treated his own flesh and blood in such a manner. The very idea of his children only getting one hundred dollars apiece, while Mrs. Crumpler, our stepmother, sat back with eight thousand dollars' worth of property around her.

On Saturday evening following the trial, father passed away. I knew nothing of his death until Sunday morning. I remained in my cottage during the day, and would have been compelled to do so in a hungry state had it not been for Mrs. T. L. Leslie sending her little daughter Grace with a nice basket of provisions.

On Thursday before father's death occurred, he asked for Sister Nell. I wrote to several places in order to ascertain something of her whereabouts, but could hear nothing from her. So father hadn't the pleasure of saying goodbye to the baby girl whom mother, when dying, had left in his charge.

Father also asked whether John was on his way home. I hardly knew what to say, so told him I thought he had started.

Then father said, "Well, I would like to speak to him once more, and tell him how he caused me to suffer when taking you from a good home and me years ago. I had planned so many things for you,

but John deprived you of all, and now I want him to take care of you in your old age. Should he fail to reach here before I pass away, don't forget my dying request."

I wrote John in regard to father's last remarks. The reply I received was, "Ida, you need not think that writing as you did in your last you will mend matters any, as such things are only calculated to make my hard heart the harder."

The evening following father's burial, I again discovered someone at my door. Upon opening it, I saw standing before me Officer White. He wanted to know how soon I would be ready to appear before the Mayor.

I told him that my attorney 'phoned me that the case had been dropped. However, if the Mayor requested me to appear in Court, I would do so with pleasure.

Before leaving, I told the officer I was getting tired of the "cop" business, and that hereafter whenever he had dealings with me, to please call at 12 m. instead of 9 p. m.

While handling the little golden cord around his hat, the lovely peachbloom upon the officer's cheeks turned a shade darker, and he remarked that the reason he came at night was because he wasn't on day duty.

I bid him good evening, and since that time Mr. White has treated me with extreme politeness. Its always best never to show the white feather under any circumstances.

CHAPTER XIV.

OTHER INCIDENTS OF MY LIFE AFTER BEING DESERTED.

One stormy night, in about two weeks after we had laid father to rest, I heard a feeble voice, as that of Sister Nell, calling to me from without. I grasped the lamp, and as I did so, wondered whether it was she in flesh and blood, or only her spirit speaking to me from the other world. With trembling footsteps I approached the door, and asked whether it was she, and whether alone. For a moment I wondered what the world would say if I opened the door. Then I said, "What need I care for the opinion of the cruel world; it's my own sister who seeks shelter from the storm, and I shall invite her within!"

She refused to enter at first; said she had only come to ascertain something in regard to father's last words. She had not heard of his death until the previous day, and could not realize that the report was true, until, on reaching the city, she visited the cemetery and beheld the newly made grave; then knew that all was over, and she an orphan, with but one remaining sister. So had come to me for comfort.

I would have been more than heartless to have turned her from my door.

On entering, her eyes fell upon the mantel, where I had arranged the family portraits. Among the number was a picture of the old home. As sister stood gazing at the scene before her, I noticed a tear drop upon her hand, and she exclaimed, "Oh, that we could recall the past!"

I placed my arm around her waist and said, "Nell, that can never be; and now you and I must make a

desperate effort to regain the dear old spot where father and mother spent their last moments. I can not bear the idea of the place falling into the hands of strangers."

After this, sister became seated in a little rocking chair given her by father in years gone by, and when the storm had ceased she took her departure. Before leaving, I kissed her, and with a piece of good advice, she disappeared. On the following day she left the city, and I have never laid eyes on her since, but mourned her as dead for seven months; then, all at once, I received a letter, saying that as I had been so very kind to her, she would like to send the children and I something. I answered her letter, thanking her for her kindness, but told her that, owing to circumstances, I could not accept the things she had offered me, and hoped that she would not become offended.

Soon after father's death, I made preparations to leave the little cottage I was occupying. I called upon James S. Dunn, the rental agent, and told him I thought he had better give me a cheaper house, as I was almost sure that my husband did not intend sending me any more money. Mr. Dunn told me to remain where I was for a few days, and he would see what could be done.

I returned home, and in the meantime wired the Chief of Police of Charlestown, W. Va., in order to learn something of my husband's whereabouts. The reply that I received was that J. L. Beard was in the city and well.

I hadn't heard from John in over three weeks—thought perhaps he was on his way home.

In a few hours after receiving the message from the Chief of Police, I received one from my husband, saying:

Have been very ill. Will leave for Cincinnati in the morning.

The day following the telegrams, I received a letter from John, telling me never to wire the Chief of Police again, as it created a bad impression.

I suppose my wiring interfered with his courting affairs; or, at least, about this time his intended asked for a recommendation from Winston. John told her certainly, she should have one! Then he sat down and wrote out a long one himself, placed it in an envelope and sent it here to his father, to be returned at once to his future bride.

The second letter I received from my husband after father's death was such a cruel one I never answered it. He wrote me that after living with me for sixteen years, he had come to the conclusion that we never were intended for each other, and that I could get a divorce as soon as I liked, and he would do the same.

How lightly he could speak of our not being intended for each other, and of getting a divorce. Oh, why did he not leave me at the happy home he took me from years before? Then I was a lighthearted girl, knowing nothing in regard to the cares of this cruel, cruel world!

After the last cruel letter had been handed me by Peter, the postman, I again called on Mr. Dunn, and told him that I had the offer of two rooms, and thought I had better accept them, as I was then certain that my husband did not intend sending me anything more.

The agent said, "Well, I think you had better remain where you are a day or two yet; perhaps I will be able in that time to borrow some money for you to pay your back rent."

I thanked him, and turned as if to leave his office. On doing so, he asked me how father's will read, and whether I intended accepting my \$100. I told him no, not unless I was compelled to do so.

Nothing more was said. I returned home, and on the following day Mr. Dunn sent J. H. Stockton, his genteel little collector, to me with a notice to vacate unless I could pay my rent immediately.

I suppose he had thought I would accept the \$100, and that he would get every cent of it for rent; when foiled in his plans, it raised his ire, and that was why he requested me to vacate at once.

There I was with my two children and no place to move to; the rooms that had been offered to me were then occupied.

I 'phoned Mr. Dunn that he must find me a cheap place, or I would be compelled to remain where I was until I could do better.

I couldn't sleep at night on account of not knowing how long I would have a shelter over my head. At last the agent promised to give me one room in the Grubbs Building, and perhaps, later on, would be able to let me have two. So I made preparations for moving. On the morning I went to have the room cleaned, Mr. Dunn informed me that I could not have it, as it was already spoken for before promising it to me. However, the agent said that he would rent me a room in the Bitting block; but would tell me in the beginning that it was a pretty tough place, and he didn't know whether I could live there or not.

Well, I thought it was better than being entirely out in the street; so, without further words over the matter, I took possession of the room adjoining the one formerly occupied by my husband when in the refining magistrate business.

On moving in, I noticed a mysterious looking set of people passing back and forth through the hall, and heard one of the men say that somebody would be compelled to move. I wondered who he had refer-

ence to, and that night realized that I had landed among a notorious set of gamblers. I scarcely knew what to do. My surroundings reminded me of Bluefield, W. Va. It was awful to think that the children and I were in such a place, alone and unprotected. I said nothing, but made up my mind to seek other quarters and get away as early as possible. After having everything thoroughly cleaned, Mr. Dunn informed me that I would have to vacate, as he had an applicant for the room who was willing to pay him \$5 per month, while I was only paying \$3. He also said that my children were disturbing the other parties in the building. I told him that I knew my children were not angels, and at the same time thought that the police would do well to pay the other parties in the building a visit once a week, if not oftener.

Mr. Dunn said that he didn't care to hear anything about his tenants.

I then asked him why he had listened to others in regard to my children. His conversation worried me, and I told him I intended remaining where I was until ready to vacate, and that if he attempted to throw me out, I would stand him a magistrate trial. He looked at me in a contemptible way, and said:

"Will you? All right!"

So, in about a week afterwards, I received a notice from Squire Bessent, requesting me to appear before him on the following evening and state why I refused to give up the room I was occupying.

I was on time, as usual; at least twenty minutes ahead of James S. Dunn, the landlord or the agent.

The magistrate told Mr. Dunn that he had much rather we would settle the matter without having a trial over it.

My attorney then read a little point of law to the

agent in regard to his not being able to throw tenants on the street without the real owner of the property signing the notice.

Mr. Dunn looked at me as though he could swallow me at one mouthful, and declared that he would call upon Colonel Bitting immediately.

I told the Justice of the Peace that I wasn't the child I looked to be, and was as anxious for the trial to proceed, as I was almost dying to give away the agent and his gambling crowd.

Mr. Dunn did not wait for trial, but flew down the stairs—where, I do not know, and on the following morning, while he passed the early hours in slumber, I was up with the early bird and caught the worm, by calling on Colonel Bitting and laying the case before him. After doing so, received permission to remain in his building. I told him I didn't care to stay a moment longer than I could find comfortable lodgings elsewhere.

Before leaving the Bitting block, thought I would burn a number of old letters that were in a satchel used by John while in Bluefield.

I tossed the missives into the fire, and all save one were enveloped in flames. The one that flew back on the floor proved to be a telegram—one that had been sent John by his father in regard to my illness while occupying the Grubbs Building. The telegram ran as follows:

WINSTON, N. C., Feb. 4th, 1896.

J. L. Beard, Bluefield, W. Va.

Don't think Ida dangerous.

W. H. BEARD.

After reading this, I knew why my husband had wired me he couldn't come. Murder will out, no matter how late in the day.

I at once called upon W. H. Beard, and asked whether he had wired or written John anything in regard to my illness while he was in Bluefield. Mr. Beard told me that he did neither.

I then produced the telegram, and said, "Well, how is this?"

The old man turned red in the face, and afterwards left the room without saying more. How could he, when I had caught him in his own net?

I said, "Sir, you can't deny having sent this message—the Western Union Telegraph office doesn't prevaricate—and I shall keep this as a souvenir of your rascality."

CHAPTER XV.

JOHN'S DIVORCE AND SECOND MARRIAGE.

Well, after I had burned the letters, I was ready to leave the building where I had spent so many unpleasant moments. It was in this wretched place I saw my children retire supperless night after night. Long after they were in a restless slumber, I looked at them, and wondered why God did not take them and cease their suffering. They did not even have a change of clothing, and at night, after they had retired, I would make clean the garments worn by them through the day.

I remember, on Easter Saturday night, '97, I was compelled to wait until 11 o'clock before beginning my night's labor, and it was 2 a. m. when the last stroke of the iron was given, and the little garments laid ready for the wearer. As I folded the last piece, I wondered if John was sleeping soundly. Oh, how could he be, while I, the poor, frail creature who bore his name, was struggling hard in order to maintain his offspring.

Many, many days, when the clock pealed out the noon hour over the city, I have dipped my cold crust in water and was thankful for even this boon. While partaking of my frugal meal, I would say, "After being reared as I have been, I am too proud to beg, and too honest to steal; therefore, am content with what I have."

Six different times my stepmother offered to pay the \$100 left me in the will, notwithstanding I wasn't to receive the amount in two years. The last time executor Lehman 'phoned me that he was ready to settle then or never.

I didn't have a piece of bread in the house, the ground was covered with snow, and Basil—the younger of my two boys—stood with me at the 'phone in a shoeless condition, saying:

"Mamma, accept the money! 'My feet are so cold!'"

I told my child to cease his pleadings, for I could not bear the idea of giving up the old home, and being turned out into the world with only \$100.

So, with the receiver to my ear, back through the transmitter I thanked Mr. Lehman, and told him I believed that I would wait and get a few dollars more, as I was anxious to walk up the aisle of the pretty new court house and break my father's will. I could hear the executor saying to someone:

"Now, just listen to what she says!"

On leaving the Bitting block, I moved to two rooms in the Tise flat. This property was also in the hands of J. S. Dunn, and as he had declared that I should never occupy another one of his houses, I paid no attention to him—just went ahead and rented from the parties who were already in the building.

Soon after moving in, Mr. Dunn sent his little collector to say to the lady below, that if they decided to give up the house, be sure that the woman above was out too. The lady told me that they had been trying to get a cheaper place, and in case they did, would let me know, so that I could speak to Mr. Tise in regard to retaining my rooms.

So I then went to the owner of the property and told him the family who occupied the lower part of the flat spoke of leaving in a few days, and I expected Dunn, the agent, would then try to throw me out.

Mr. Tise told me to remain where I was, and perhaps someone else would move in below.

On the following day he sent his night watchman

and family to take possession without the agent knowing it.

A few days after this occurrence, here came the dear little collector again, telling me that Mr. Dunn requested me to vacate at once. I told him all right, whenever Mr. Tise signs the notice, and not before.

The collector said, "Well, I guess he will sign the notice this evening."

I suppose he did nothing of the kind, or at least I haven't heard from the agent since.

My time has been occupied with other things. Not very long ago I received a notice of my husband's second marriage. I knew nothing of his being granted a divorce until I read the above; so I do not consider him legally married, even according to the laws of West Virginia.

I will say to the woman whom he married, that she is perfectly welcome to my late husband, so far as I am concerned, and I think that by the time she learns something of his rascality, and hears a few of his blood-curdling oaths, she will regret the day she met John Lewis Beard, the "Tar Heel."

After reading an account of John's marriage, I wrote the Sheriff of Kanawha County, in order to ascertain on what grounds he obtained a divorce. I was anxious to learn, as I was sure he could not have gotten one here in his own State.

A friend of John's—in former days—afterwards remarked that if he couldn't have obtained a divorce in his own State, he wouldn't have tried elsewhere, and that he would just like to be in the city where John Beard was for about five minutes. Could he have been there, I don't think my divorced husband would have enjoyed his friend's society for any great length of time.

John not only mistreated me during our married life, but was guilty of theft in many instances. On leaving this city, he carried with him twenty dollars' worth of law books belonging to L. M. Swink; and I suppose he hasn't forgotten the seventy-five dollars he pocketed while in the employ of the Sick Benefit Company. I would also like to see him standing before a crowd of ten thousand people, then ask him what became of the money he should have turned over to the owner of some furniture that had been placed in his care. My wretched husband disposed of the furniture, then pocketed the money, and told me to keep quiet until he had left the State. This was just before going to Bluefield, and I guess the poor old negro will wait many, many long days ere he receives the amount due him.

The letter I received from the Sheriff of Kanawha County in regard to my husband's divorce affair, was that he did not charge me with infidelity, nor in any way compromise me, other than that while he was an affectionate and dutiful husband, I was the opposite, not being reciprocal, but of a quarrelsome and jealous nature. On these grounds he had obtained a divorce.

The week previous to John's marriage, he sent a letter back here to his few friends, requesting them to sign a document stating that I was a lewd woman.

The wretches very well knew they didn't dare do a thing of this kind, as I lived above reproach; so the document was returned to Charlestown unsigned.

I look upon this last act as being the vilest one committed by John. The villain wasn't satisfied with taking my furniture and deserting me, but in the end wanted to deprive me of my all—that which money could not purchase.

After receiving the Sheriff's letter, I prayed very earnestly one evening that the Lord would, by some means, point out to me the person who filled the blank representing me as being quarrelsome and jealous. That same night I dreamed that P. T. Lehman was the author; so, on the following morning, I waited for him to pass my residence, then questioned him closely in regard to the above. With his finger placed in one corner of his mouth, and resembling a sheep-killing cur, he admitted that I had struck the nail on the head, and that he was the one who had filled out the blank.

In a moment, I knew why Mr. Lehman had done this. Once, while he and my husband were partners in the magistrate business, he had told John to compel me to do my own washing and ironing, and I had asked him whether he thought it was any of his business to meddle with our private affairs. Since that time Mr. Lehman and I have been at outs, and I suppose it did him good to wreak his vengeance upon me by signing the document.

And now, dear reader, lest I weary you, I will bring this part of my narrative to a close by saying that I live in hope of breaking my father's will and returning to the old home once more to bury my past where it began—beneath the rosebush in the yard.

CHAPTER XVI.

BEGINNING MY TOUR.

According to promise, I will make a few remarks in regard to the trial, and other facts.

The long-deferred trial has at last been reached, terminating in my winning the suit. All along I felt as though I could not do otherwise, having with me a band of upright witnesses and A. H. Eller, Messrs. Watson, Buxton & Watson, four of the most famous lawyers in our city. Each of these gentlemen just referred to seemed at their best while speaking in my behalf, and I am sure their names will ring out over this wide land to-day for so nobly defending me, a poor, penniless creature. As to whether I shall return to the old home I do not know; for some reason the verdict rendered by the jury was set aside, to the surprise of those at the Bar and everyone else.

Well, the defendants of the will were granted a new trial, and now another battle is to be fought, another victory to be won. I shall fight until my last ball is spent and the last man has fallen. I am determined not to give up the home of my girlhood unless compelled to do so by the hands of law. I shall venture back home for awhile, at least long enough to dig the grave of my past, into which I shall drop the loving missives written me by John in the long, long ago, and in this way will end another fatal wedded life. Perhaps at some future day my children will revisit the dear spot from whence their mother fled, and while reconnoitering over the place will, like Barbara of old, unearth the hidden treasures that lie buried beneath the rosebush in the yard.

Now, I can almost hear you say, Please do not forget to tell us something in regard to Mr. Penry, and also of your early morning flight to the Norfolk and Western depot. In the beginning, will say that I do not bear the least particle of malice toward Mr. Penry for entering my private bedchamber after 11 o'clock at night, as he was invited to do so by my husband. And at the time I have reference to, I suppose that Mr. Penry considered himself under obligations to John, he having been instrumental in procuring him a position with Messrs. Greentree & Hofflin, and I guess Mr. Penry thought it nothing more than right that the kindness be returned by participating in what he and his Cheap John friend termed a social game of cards. Let it be as it may, I blame no one but John Lewis Beard, the wretch whose name I then bore, and for my children's sake still bear.

As to my early morning visit to the Norfolk and Western depot, will say that I arrived at the station just in time to forbid the agent selling a ticket to Robah, who was being persuaded by W. H. Beard to desert me and go to his father, then residing in Roanoke, Va. After the train had gone out that morning, Robah visited his grandfather's residence, and then left the city with the intention of going by private conveyance as far as Walnut Cove, at which place he intended boarding the train for Roanoke on the following day.

Imagine my suspense after Robah had taken his departure. I could do nothing but wonder whether he had reached his destination, or whether, like the babes in the wood, had fallen asleep along the roadside with only the moon and stars for his companions.

I suppose that W. H. Beard and his son John thought that by robbing me of my child they would

crush my heart entirely, but such was not to be the case. No, I was to live, yes, live to avenge my wrong.

Robah remained in Roanoke with his father about a week, then, penniless, was returned to me. One frosty night in November, 1897, I heard a rap upon the door. Of course I asked who it was that sought admittance. The answer I received ran as follows:

"It's me, mamma; open the door. I have come back. Yes, he sent me home, or rather she did."

I asked my child what he meant by saying she.

He said, "I mean Miss Annie, the woman papa calls his wife. She said that I must resemble you, as I didn't papa, and that I was winning all of his affection from her, therefore I must return home to you, or she would go back to her people in Charlestown."

Well, I had recovered my child, but the one dream of my life had not yet been realized. I was almost crazed to see in print the story I had written. Was I ever to do so or not? Yes, my dream was soon to be a reality, and I was overcome with joy on the morning that C. G. Lanier called at my residence in order to inform me that he was ready to begin the publication of the work I had recently completed.

Mr. Lanier was a month in getting my work ready to be placed before the public. During this time I scarcely knew whether I was on land or on sea—so anxious was I to clasp in my hands the little yellow-back book, entitled "My Own Life, or a Deserted Wife."

On Thursday, April 10, 1898, the first lot of books were sent to my residence, and ere the setting of the sun I had collected \$25. I had 200 subscribers to begin with, so, of course, had nothing to do but deliver the books and receive pay for them.

I was perfectly happy while canvassing. My whole soul seemed to be in the work I had undertaken.

After disposing of three hundred copies of my work in Winston and Salem, I decided to make a tour of the State. This, I knew, would necessitate my being separated from home and loved ones, but hungry children must be fed; so, without further thought over the matter, I made up my mind to begin travelling; and on May 31, 1898, I left Winston for Greensboro and Salisbury, N. C.

My week's stay in the City of Flowers was a pleasant as well as a profitable one, and I was loth to leave when the hour arrived for my departure.

From Greensboro, I visited the historic little town of Salisbury, at which place I was given a warm reception, on account of it being the home of my sister, Mrs. W. R. Meroney. She, when living, had made quite a host of friends, who were anxious to learn something of her earlier days. I would scarcely leave my boarding house before I would hear someone saying, "Good-morning, Mrs. Beard; I want to purchase a copy of your book. I have heard it spoken of very highly through the press."

The *Salisbury Sun* was kind in giving me a nice little ad., which enabled me to dispose of a number of books elsewhere. While in this historic city, I spent most of my leisure moments at Flora's grave. It afforded me a great deal of pleasure to arrange Nature's blossoms upon the mound that contained the remains of my beloved sister.

After leaving Salisbury, I returned to Winston for a few days, then started out on my second trip; this time going to Roanoke, Va., where I spent a pleasant week, sold a number of books, and made many friends.

Mrs. N. E. Strain, the lady with whom I boarded, was very kind to me. She seemed more like a mother than anything else, and I feel as though I were indebted to her for a great many of my sales.

Before leaving Roanoke, I was told that only a few weeks prior to my arrival in the city, John Lewis Beard and his Annie had been residents of the place also, and that in order to obtain the wherewith to leave Roanoke, Mr. Beard had placed under the auction stand the wedding dress belonging to Mrs. Beard No. 2. So gentle Annie's trouble began soon after marriage. Yes, ere the waning of the honeymoon. And, as I have already said, I am afraid she will yet regret meeting John Lewis Beard, the Tar Heel.

While in Roanoke, I learned a great many things in regard to the life John Beard had led since deserting his children and I. One evening, while sitting in the parlor at my boarding house, another lady transient happened to step into the room also, and on turning over the leaves of my book noticed John's photo, and exclaimed, "Why, dear me, this is the very wretch that beat mother out of a forty-dollar board bill a few months ago." The lady at once purchased a copy of my work and sent it to her parent, then residing at Coburn, W. Va.

I also received a letter from Mr. and Mrs. G. P. Hicks, of Alderson, W. Va., parties with whom John Beard and his beautiful bride boarded during their stay in the city. In her letter, Mrs. H. stated that "Beard left not only owing her husband a great deal in the store, but owing his board also." Not a cent of board did he pay for himself or his Annie.

In closing her remarks, Mrs. H. went on to say that Beard owed a merchant in Alderson, and a board bill in Hinton, W. Va., and she did think it looked hard to see a villain running around when he knew, and everyone else knew, how badly he had acted, and she was sorry indeed that she had permitted Beard and bride to remain in her house.

CHAPTER XVII.

ENDING OF MY TOUR.

Upon leaving Roanoke, I returned to my own State, and after spending a day or two with the children, started out again for the purpose of earning a livelihood by the sale of books. On this, my third trip, I visited the following cities: Durham, Raleigh, Goldsboro, Wilmington and Fayetteville, N. C.

In Durham, I sold a number of books and made many warm friends, who seemed to regret my short stay among them.

My visit to Raleigh, the capital of our State, will long be remembered by me.

From childhood's hour, I seemed to have a great desire to visit the capital city, but the opportunity was never afforded me until July, 1898. The day following my arrival in Raleigh, I called upon the Governor, and was given a cordial reception by himself and staff.

Upon entering the capitol, I hardly knew which way to go, but presently found myself standing in the doorway of Rev. Baylus Cade, the Governor's Private Secretary. Immediately upon entering Mr. Cade's office, I introduced myself, and then asked to see the Governor. The Secretary, in a polite way, remarked that, owing to my being a lady, he was very much afraid that the boon I had asked would be denied me.

Mr. Cade said, "I expect that you have come to ask a pardon for some dear one, and on this account the Governor will not receive you, as he possesses a tender heart, and can't bear the idea of refusing a lady that which she may demand of him." I told the Sec-

retary I had not come to ask for a pardon, but had recently completed a biography of my life, and was anxious to present the Governor with a copy of my work. Before I had ceased speaking, I heard a voice from within an adjoining room saying, "Admit the lady." In a moment more, I was standing in the presence of the great ruler of our State, and Secretary Cade saying, "Governor Russell, allow me to present to you Mrs. Ida M. Beard, of Winston, N. C." The Governor clasped my hand and exclaimed, "Mrs. Beard, I am truly glad to meet you; be seated, and tell me your story."

While doing so, I felt as though I were a Brownie, or one of Gulliver's Lilliputians. Yes, in size I was a mere mite compared with that of the immense ruler.

The conversation with the Governor being ended, I bade him adieu, and, in company with Secretary Cade, repaired to the different offices in the building, where I disposed of several books. After leaving the capitol, I visited the business houses of the city.

Here I again met with a great deal of encouragement by the rapid sale of my literature, and while standing in the doorway of one of the immense emporiums, I heard a soldier boy say to the proprietor that he thought I would do well to visit the camp. I immediately turned to the proprietor and asked whether there would be any impropriety in my doing so. He replied to me by saying, "No, not in the least. You have a right to go wherever your business calls you."

So, early on the following morning, I set out for the spot where were stationed the Second Regiment of North Carolina. On nearing the camp ground, my heart seemed to be in my mouth, and my voice trembled so that I could scarcely ask of a sentinel permis-

sion to pass. But the moment I entered camp a peaceful feeling came over me, and I felt as though I were at home among friends, and that I had nothing to fear while in the midst of those brave boys clad in blue; although numbering thirteen hundred, they were perfect gentlemen, every one of them, and I shall never forget the kindness shown me by the Second Regiment of North Carolina.

As I passed down the line, pausing at each little white tent long enough to tell my story, coats went on and hats off like a streak of lightning. For awhile fifty-cent pieces fell into my hands like hailstones, and in less than two hours time my purse contained \$100. Well, I was minus the books I had carried with me on leaving my boarding house that morning, and with my empty satchel was in the act of leaving camp, when, all at once, several of the soldiers exclaimed, "Madam, when you complete your story, for heaven's sake don't say anything about us cooks." With a smile I turned to the boys in blue and assured them that whatever I might say would be to their interest.

Upon reaching my lodging place, I recalled to mind the old maxim, "work, and then play." So I said to myself before bidding the capital city adieu, I will spend a day sight seeing; and on the following morning I was up with the lark, filled a satchel with books, and with my arms laden with flowers, repaired to the rude hospital at Camp Russell, wherein a number of our boys lay ill and dying. I was anxious to do something for them, so left flowers to be placed upon the caskets of those who would soon be beyond all earthly aid, and books for those that would remain to fight a few more of life's hard battles.

From the hospital, I visited the Museum, the State Library, and thence to Oakwood Cemetery, as I had

a passing fancy to gaze upon the last resting place of Ensign Worth Bagley, who fell while fighting so nobly for his country. When war between the United States and Spain was declared, little did this brave young North Carolinian think that he would be the first to fall. In the State Library my eyes had rested upon a portrait of Colonel Wyatt, and now as I stood gazing upon the mound that contained the remains of Ensign Bagley, ten thousand thoughts passed through my mind. I wondered whether he, too, had been young, handsome and intelligent as that other hero who fell during the Civil War. If so, then why were these two specimens of heroic manhood cut down in early life?

From Raleigh, I went to Wilmington, the city by the sea. On my way to Wilmington, I stopped for a few hours in Goldsboro, where I found a ready sale for my books, notwithstanding the place had been the former home of my stepmother. In Wilmington, I spent a pleasant week, sold a number of books, and, as I had done elsewhere, made many friends. Before leaving the city by the sea, I spent the day at Carolina Beach. There I met a number of old acquaintances, who insisted that I take a plunge into the surf.

This I told them I did not approve of, but would indulge in a little innocent amusement, such as strolling up and down the beach, in order to make a collection of the different specimens of shells that had been washed ashore. This being done, I bade adieu to the host and hostess of Oceanica Hotel, and repaired to the city, where I made preparations for my return to Winston. On my way home, I spent a day or two in Fayetteville. The lady with whom I stopped was kindness itself, and this, with the rapid sale of books, made my brief stay a pleasant one. On reach-

ing Winston, I only remained a short while, then took my departure for Norfolk, Portsmouth, Old Point, Hampton Roads and Newport News, Va. At the places already mentioned I was successful in regard to the sale of my books, and, upon the whole, think my trip an interesting one.

At Old Point, I visited Fortress Monroe, and also had the pleasure of beholding several large vessels, which only a few days before had returned home from Cuba.

At Newport News, I visited the site whereon were stationed the One Hundred and Sixtieth Regiment of Indiana. Here I disposed of a number of books to officers and privates. On leaving Newport News, I boarded a steamer bound for Norfolk, and while sitting in the cozy stateroom, the thought occurred to me that I was on board the *Louise*, and that on this vessel a friend of my youth was employed, so I immediately repaired to the Captain's side and asked whether he knew of anyone by the address I handed him. The Captain looked at me, and exclaimed, "Yes, Floyd is with us, and a whole-souled fellow is he." In a moment more, before me stood a sailor whose hair was streaked with gray, plainly telling the old, old story that nineteen years had passed by since last we met. After greeting each other in the usual way, numerous questions were asked in regard to friends and acquaintances far away in my own State. I, in return, made inquiry as to the health of my friend's wife and children. Then came the most important question of all—"And where is John? I believe you married him soon after I left Winston?" I made no reply to my friend's remark, but handed him a copy of the book I was selling. He looked at me, then at my work, and exclaimed, "Is it possible that John

took you from your comfortable home, married and deserted you?"

Mr. H. then gave me a cordial invitation to visit his family, which I did in a day or two after our unexpected meeting with each other on the steamer. I found my friend and family installed in a comfortable little home in Portsmouth, Va. Mrs. H., although a stranger, received me kindly, and made me feel that I was among friends. While in Portsmouth, I visited the Marine Hospital, where I had the pleasure of seeing Admiral Severa and his son. Before leaving the hospital I visited the cemetery, and was shown the grave of three Spanish soldiers who had recently died.

From an officer standing near by I made inquiry as to whether these poor captives had left any message for loved ones far away in their native land. But not a word of farewell had been spoken, so parents dear would never know what became of the boys that shouldered arms to fight for what they thought to be their country's rights. The officer from whom I had gleaned the information in regard to the dead soldiers also informed me that in a few days Severa and his son would sail for Spanish shores, so I was more than pleased to have had the opportunity of seeing a real Spanish Admiral. From Portsmouth I embarked for Richmond and Danville, Va.

I was quite ill on the morning after my arrival in the city of Richmond, but, nevertheless, began my canvassing tour, and in a very short while realized a nice little sum by the sale of my books. I enjoyed my visit to the Capitol, and in this mammoth structure disposed of my work readily.

Hollywood Cemetery was another spot admired by me. The place has a tendency to make one feel as though they would like to repose forever 'neath the boughs of the magnolia.

In Danville I disposed of fifty books within an hour's time. I found the citizens sociable and quite willing to aid me in my work.

After leaving Danville I visited Reidsville and Charlotte, N. C., where I again sold books readily. From Charlotte I went to Asheville, the "Land of the Sky." In this celestial city I spent a pleasant week disposing of books, inhaling the salubrious atmosphere and drinking water from the sparkling Swannanoa, Western Carolina's pride. While canvassing along the Western Carolina Road I spent several pleasant hours in Hickory and Statesville. At each place the citizens seemed anxious to purchase a copy of my book. Those who had read something of my work spoke of it very highly and gave me a cordial invitation to visit them again the moment my story was complete.

On returning home from the "Land of the Sky" I only had about thirty books left me out of the first issue. So, of course, knew that I could make but one more trip, and that not a distant one.

Where to go I hardly knew, but finally decided to visit Mount Airy, the "Granite City." I had quite a time in reaching this airy little town far up among the hills. On the morning that I was to leave Winston the sky looked threatening, with angry clouds floating here and there, indicating that there would be a general downpour before nightfall. It seems as though I am destined to have a rainy day whenever I have occasion to take a trip up the N. and W. road, and on this special occasion I was in the very midst of what one might term a cloud-burst. Every seat in the car was occupied, and we were nearing our destination when, all at once, learned that we could go no further on account of there being a hundred

feet of washout just ahead of us, and the bridge extending across the Ararat River had been entirely swept away by the turbulent waters. What to do we hardly knew. There we stood in four feet of water, fearing to take a step either way, lest we plunge into eternity. Finally we ran back to Pilot Mountain, a little station this side of Mount Airy. There we were side-tracked and remained in the car until morning. The gentlemen on board converted the seats into a comfortable resting place for me, but to sleep soundly I could not, and was truly glad when morning dawned.

On awaking from our restless slumber we discovered that the citizens of the village had surrounded our car and were gazing upon us as though we were a travelling menagerie belonging to P. T. Barnum's circus. The kind-hearted village folk informed us that on the previous night, shortly after our train had passed the station, they heard the danger signal and knew something was wrong, and that this was why they were astir earlier than usual, ready and willing to render us any assistance that might be needed.

After partaking of a sumptuous breakfast at Hotel Shepherd, we began debating among ourselves as to what we should do, whether to continue our journey or return home. Some of the crew decided upon the former while others the latter. I joined the party going through to Mount Airy by private conveyance. We reached our destination about 2 o'clock on Saturday afternoon. Almost immediately upon my arrival in the Granite City I began canvassing, and disposed of \$10 worth of books by the time king sun had sank to rest below the western horizon. My stay at Mount Airy was pleasant but of short duration. As I made a thorough canvass of the city by Monday noon, and in order to work Walnut Cove and reach home by 10

p. m., I boarded an out-going freight, which landed me in the little "Cove" about sundown. Well, I didn't mind the lateness of the hour, but went right ahead with my work, disposing of books readily. While canvassing the city a merchant informed me that only a few days before a salesman had passed through the town and laughingly remarked that he could have rested fairly well in the train on the night of the storm if it had not been for the prattling tongue of a little book agent from Winston. He said she canvassed until break of day. Of course this was intended as a joke, and owing to the kindness shown me by the hero of the railroad disaster, I will refrain from mentioning his name, but will say right here that it wasn't my canvassing that kept him awake, but the half-dozen hard-boiled eggs he had eaten for his midnight supper.

My work being finished in Walnut Cove, I returned to Winston, vowing that but a short period should elapse ere I again was numbered among the Knights of the Grip; and since the time referred to I have left no stone unturned in regard to having the second volume of my book published, so that I could earn a comfortable livelihood for myself and little ones.

And now, in conclusion, I have one request to make of you, dear reader. It is this: In the garden of memory allow me a tiny spot in which to plant one sweet Forget-me-not.

P. S.—Since completing my story I have received a novel from my so-called divorced husband. At first I was rather inclined to return the book unopened to the donor, but woman's curiosity caused me to open the package handed me by Mr. C. Jones, the postman. On turning over the leaves of the book I noticed several paragraphs marked for my special benefit. On reading the above, learned something in regard to a character who must have been a twin-brother in vice, if not in flesh and blood, to John Lewis Beard.

From the run of the story it seems as if though at one time a beautiful young girl had the misfortune to fall desperately in love with a man who, after marriage, proved himself to be a villain of the deepest dye. Yes, without any provocation whatever, he deserted the wife of his bosom, leaving her to the mercies of this cruel world. Some years after remorse overtakes the wretched husband; peace and happiness can nowhere be found. So he makes up his mind to return to the village and to the wife he so ruthlessly cast aside. The wife is found living beneath the roof of her doting old father, surrounded by all the comforts of life, and positively refuses to return to her truant husband. He becomes somewhat wrathful on account of the refusal he receives and points a revolver at his wife, fires, but misses his aim. From fear the wife swoons, falls to the floor. The husband, thinking her dead, puts a ball through his own heart, and thus ends what is known to the world as the "Copsford Mystery."

What John Beard's idea was for sending me the book I do not know, but suppose it was either to pave his way back to Winston or to warn me of approaching death. While living in Bluefield he said to me one

evening, "Ida, if I was to desert you and then return, would you live with me again?"

I looked at my husband and exclaimed, "John, I will never give you a cause to leave me, and should you do so, I would never live with you again; no, not to save your life from the gallows."

My husband then remarked that he could force me to live with him if I still bore his name, and that if I refused to comply with his request he would kill me without a moment's warning.

Dear reader, for your benefit as well as my own, I will place before you the contents of a letter written me by my friend, Mrs. G. P. Hicks, of Alderson, W. Va.:

ALDERSON, W. Va., June 24, 1898.

MRS. IDA M. BEARD. *Winston, N. C.*

MY DEAR FRIEND:—Your welcome letter received a few days ago. I was indeed glad to hear from you again. I also received your photo. Many thanks for it. I am glad that you call me a friend, for I want to be your friend. You do not seem at all like a stranger, although we have not had the pleasure of meeting.

I am glad you enjoyed my letter. Am glad I can say a sympathetic word to you. I know you have suffered a great deal, all on John Beard's account, and I truly believe he will be punished for the way he has treated a pure, innocent woman. That is what I believe you to be, a true, good Christian woman. If John Beard is not punished on this earth, he will certainly receive his just dues in the world to come. How could any man be as mean to a pure, innocent wife as he has been to you? I can not understand how the rascal gets from place to place doing the way he is. How my heart ached for you as I read your book! God will surely take care of you and your two boys, and I trust that you will be happier from this on than you have ever been before. I trust your boys will grow up to be true Christian gentlemen, and will always be a help and comfort to you. I too believe John Beard will desert his Annie. I have heard several say the same thing. I do not see how he could ever have deserted as sweet, innocent and good-looking woman as you to marry Miss Annie Qualls. Everybody that knew Mr. Beard was surprised when he brought his bride here. She is very homely, very dark, and has no education and no refinement. What he fell in love with I do not know. I believe he will soon grow tired of her, although he thought she was the prettiest and sweetest thing that ever walked the earth. He acted real simple about her. I like

to see a man fond of his wife, but I do not believe in kissing and hugging so much in the presence of other people. I am affectionate and of a loving disposition myself, but I never like so much hugging and kissing in the presence of strangers or company. When I see man and wife act so much that way in company I always think they are not that way when they are alone. Do you know where John and his Annie are now? I heard he was in Ronceverte (just twelve miles, I believe, above here), a short time ago. There was a circus up there, and I heard one of our town boys say he (John Beard) was working with the circus, but he did not speak to him.

There is to be a large show here the 4th of July, but I don't think Mr. Beard will ever come to Alderson again. I believe he would like to visit Winston if he wasn't afraid, but his Annie said she would never go there. Many thanks, dear friend, for the book. I'll always keep it and appreciate your kindness. I hope you will have very much success, and I will be very glad to know when you get your other books completed.

I would like to meet you and your two little boys very much. I have two little boys, too, Herbert and Vaught. How old are your boys? I suppose Robah is almost a young man. I have heard Mr. Beard speak of them. I hope you will come out this way soon. I would be very glad to have you come out; would certainly love to meet you. If you come to West Virginia you must come to Alderson and visit me. Hoping to hear from you very soon, I am, with kind wishes,
Your true friend, MRS. G. P. HICKS.









